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BELMOUR:

A

NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BELMOUR:

A NOVEL.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

IT was towards the end of June, when the earl of Delavere quitted the hot, dusty town, for his castle, in the county of———, on the western coast of England. The earl, though already in an advanced age, was full of health and activity; and was one of those few fortunate beings, who had been placed precisely in the situation of life, which best suited his taste and capacity, and was best calculated to display the

really good qualities of his mind—generosity and benevolence. While his princely fortune served for the gratification of all his wishes, his hand was ever open to assist the indigent; and his pride, which was great, led him still more to the desire of praise for munificence, than to the mere ostentation of riches: but to the nice discrimination of real genius, and unassuming merit, the powers of his mind were by no means equal; he therefore sometimes assisted the less worthy, and afforded his protection to inferiour talents.

Leaning back in his carriage as he drove up a fine double avenue of limes, which led immediately to his magnificent castle, attended by a numerous train of servants, he viewed with a complacent

placent feel of enjoyment the many ſurrounding beauties of the ſcene, beſtowed by nature, and improved by art, at the ſeat of his anceſtors, together with an unalloyed ſenſe of all the advantages he derived from fortune.

He was accompanied by his only ſon, lord Belmour, and his daughter, lady Caroline Belmour:—turning to the latter, who ſat in a penſive reverie by his ſide, he waved forward his hand to make her remark the increaſing growth of the trees, and the fine bright evening ſun, that lighted up every object; but finding her inattentive, and that ſhe anſwered only by a faint ſmile, after gently preſſing her hand, he addreſſed the remainder of his diſcourſe to lord Belmour.

They were received at the caſtle with the accuſtomed diſplay of grandeur and ceremony. The old porter bowed low at the gate; all the ſervants "each particular of duty knew," and were exact in the performance of their ſeparate offices. Two fat chaplains attended in the great hall, their faces not a little exhilarated by the earl's being come much earlier than uſual, to paſs the ſummer at his caſtle, and already in imagination devouring the veniſon and other dainties of his profuſe table, which united the plenty of an ancient Engliſh baron, to the elegant nicety of the beſt French cookery.

The earl, after a ſhort compliment to the obſequious chaplains, and a nod of protection, paſſed on to his ſtudy, whither

whither he was followed by his ſteward, impatient to receive the orders of his lord, and welcome his arrival.

Lady Caroline, although the laſt day's journey had been but ſhort, feeling herſelf fatigued, retired immediately to her own apartment. Her fine frame ſunk under a preſſure of grief and diſappointment, and her health was daily impairing. In vain could ſhe ſeek relief from reflecting on the many advantages ſhe poſſeſſed; her high birth, youth, and beauty, with a mind far from uncultivated, as they gave her greater claims to happineſs, often made the ſad reverſe more ſenſible to her heart.

Her affections had long been deeply engaged, and her too-confiding ſpirit

had left her unprepared againſt the poſſibility of indifference or neglect from the man, by whom ſhe had once thought herſelf tenderly beloved.—It was at Spa that ſhe firſt ſaw Derville: he joined to an uncommonly pretty figure the moſt captivating eaſe of manners.—Sure of pleaſing, by an apparent careleſſneſs he but made his object more certain, and gave a value to the ſlighteſt attentions he deigned to pay, although they always tended to ſome gratification of his own.

The general admiration, which lady Caroline excited at Spa, firſt attracted his notice; and as he was then unengaged in any other purſuit, his attentions to her ſoon became marked, and were received by her in a manner, to which his vanity could not fail of being

ſenſible;

ſenſible; for the natural modeſty and reſerve of her character were little calculated, to impoſe on one ſo well verſed in the knowledge of the female heart as Derville. He was already known to lady Newport, a near relation of lord Delavere's, who had obtained leave of him, to take charge of his daughter for a part of the ſummer, and carry her with her to Spa.

To lady Newport, therefore, Derville immediately addreſſed his attentions, and familiarly claimed an acquaintance, that had, indeed, before been but ſlight—little more than having ſeen her at every aſſembly in town, and having occaſionally *honoured* her with a bow, when they met in a doorway.—She on her part was agreeably

ſurprized at having ſo faſhionable a young man in her train, and cared not to what ſhe owed a diſtinction, that to her appeared ſo flattering.—Seizing the *ton* of intimacy, with which he addreſſed her, ſhe preſented him to lady Caroline, with a complacent air of protection, expreſſive of the *great* acquiſition made to their ſociety in a perſon of Derville's figure, to whom there *could* be no objection. He was from that moment their conſtant attendant, no party was formed without firſt conſulting him, and lady Newport ſoon gave him a general invitation to her houſe.

She failed not ſhortly to perceive, what was the real cauſe of attraction to Derville; but being one of thoſe officious characters, glad to make themſelves

ſelves agreeable at any rate, and ſufficiently a woman of the world not to make her intentions too obvious, ſhe without appearance of deſign encouraged the wiſhes of Derville, and promoted an intimacy, which ſhe ſaw grew daily to have more charms for her unſuſpicious young friend.—Every thing thus conſpired, to engage her affections in that dangerous errour, which afterwards clouded all the bright proſpects of her early life.

The very place, in which ſhe ſaw Derville, was calculated, to make him appear to peculiar advantage in her eyes. He rode well, danced well, and poſſeſſed a thouſand perſonal accompliſhments, which could not have been diſplayed in London; where he

found, that to appear an indolent lounging fop, was the eaſieſt road to ſucceſs. His paternal eſtate was not very conſiderable, but what with loading one part of it with mortgages, ſelling another, and having been fortunate at play, he continued to live in the moſt faſhionable ſtyle of expenſive diſſipation.

Week after week paſſed on imperceptibly at Spa, and the time ſettled for their return to England nearly approached. Lady Caroline felt an undiſguiſed melancholy at the thoughts of leaving Derville, tempered however by the idea of his following them to England, which he had declared he ſhould do, whenever they returned thither. His attentions to her had been for ſome time more marked, and the

turn

turn of his diſcourſe often ſo ſerious, that ſhe doubted not, but that the inconſiderableneſs of his fortune, compared to her's, alone prevented his ſpeaking openly to her of marriage; which, far from diſpleaſing her, was, ſhe thought, a mark of the delicacy and truth of his paſſion; and ſhe was perſuaded, that her father would not long refuſe his conſent, when he found her happineſs deeply intereſted.

Her mother was a conſiderable heireſs, and having died not many years after her marriage with lord Delavere, almoſt the whole of her fortune had devolved, according to the marriage ſettlements, on lady Caroline, as the only younger child. She felt therefore, from the generoſity of her

diſpoſition, much ſatisfaction in the idea of being perhaps able thus to remove, as ſhe thought, the only objection, that could be made to her marriage with Derville, whoſe fortune certainly was not ſo ample, as ſhe might have had a right to expect.

A part of the enſuing winter after her return to England had however already elapſed, without Derville's having come to any direct explanation; when a rich uncle of his, thinking himſelf near dying, offered to ſettle his whole eſtate upon him, provided he would immediately marry. Derville, although he really admired lady Caroline, and was ſenſible to her too viſible tenderneſs for him, was by no means diſpoſed to matrimony, and thought with horrour of the immenſe

immenſe *trouble* of breaking-off a connection, in which he had been for ſome time engaged with the wife of his *particular friend*, a woman of a high and violent ſpirit; to ſay nothing of a favourite French *figurante*, with whom he actually lived. Yet, as the advantage to himſelf in the offer of his uncle was ſo manifeſt, and as he was at the time ſomewhat preſſed on the ſcore of money, he determined to undertake the management of theſe ſeparate intereſts.

Full of this idea, and lady Darford (for ſo ſhe was called) being at the time abſent from town, he actually made propoſals in form to lady Caroline; taking his chance for what might be the conſequence at lady Darford's return.

The

The unſuſpecting lady Caroline now thought all her brighteſt hopes realized, and the high opinion her fond imagination had entertained of Derville's honour confirmed. She knew not the particular circumſtances, but merely that Derville was made heir to a great eſtate, and that he had ſeized that moment for an explanation her heart had long wiſhed; which left no doubt in her mind of the generous and diſintereſted motives, that had hitherto prevented him from openly declaring his ſentiments.

The earl, her father, although a marriage with Derville did not by any means ſatisfy his expectations for the eſtabliſhment of *his* daughter, would not withhold his conſent, as ſhe candidly

didly avowed to him the ſituation of her heart. Lord Delavere however, as he was ſhortly going for a few months to Ireland, in order to ſettle ſome buſineſs relative to eſtates which he had there, begged that all final arrangements reſpecting the marriage might be deferred till his return.

A ſhort month paſſed after her father's departure; during which poor lady Caroline indulged in every flattering hope of future happineſs, little foreſeeing the ſtorm, that was gathering over her head,—when lady Darford arrived unexpectedly in town.—Derville had been extremely in love with her, and was ſtill kept in her chains by every effort of the moſt artful captivation on her ſide.—She had heard of

of his intended marriage, but not from himſelf, and came purpoſely, full of paſſion and violence, to reclaim at any rate her captive.—Derville was extremely diſcompoſed; at her arrival and it was with the greateſt difficulty, that he could at all pacify her, and bring her to conſent to a meaſure, taken merely, as he ſaid, to extricate himſelf from pecuniary difficulties, and oblige his dying uncle.—But ſuch were the conceſſions on which ſhe inſiſted, ſuch her unguarded jealouſy of lady Caroline, whoſe youth, beauty, and unblemiſhed character, might well excite her fears, that her pretenſions ſoon became too evident to be miſtaken.—She followed them every where in public, watched every look, and prevented every common attention, that Derville's preſent engage-

engagement with lady Caroline rendered in a manner unavoidable.

Lady Caroline could not long fail of being ſenſible of Derville's embarraſſment and change of manner. Yet ſhe for ſome time endeavoured to deceive herſelf, and was willing to make every allowance for the quickneſs of her own feelings; till the freſh marks of neglect, with which ſhe found herſelf daily treated, made it impoſſible for her any longer to miſtake an indifference, which he ſcarcely attempted to conceal, while he only laughed at her uneaſineſs as trifling and childiſh.

A melancholy ſtate of ſeeming apathy took place in the mind of lady Caroline, and not a ſingle complaint eſcaped

eſcaped her lips.—She was now near two and twenty, and knew enough of the world, to be ſenſible of her own ſituation; ſhe had too much honeſt pride, and too much real tenderneſs, to bear the thoughts of dividing the affections of the man ſhe loved with another; and ſhe plainly ſaw, that, if ſhe married Derville, ſhe muſt condeſcend to become the companion of his miſtreſs, or be wholly deprived of his ſociety.

She determined however, to wait till her father returned, whoſe abſence had been prolonged from week to week, before ſhe declared her final determination, which indeed the behaviour of Derville more and more confirmed.—He was no longer ſhackled, or diſtreſſed by pecuniary conſiderations, as his uncle had

actually settled his whole estate upon him; and lady Darford on her part spared no pains, nor hesitated at any sacrifice, that might contribute to render the dawdling attendance on her, to which he had been so long accustomed, and which was so congenial to his disposition, every thing he wished. He therefore felt less and less solicitatious about his marriage, which he saw would entail on him an endless contest; and he doubted indeed much, whether in any case marriage were, or were not a good thing. He therefore contented himself with honourably declaring, that he was ready to fulfil his engagement with lady Caroline; and with the most perfect ease and composure trusted the final event to chance.

Lord

Lord Delavere at his return would not have much regretted the breaking off of a marriage, which he had never thoroughly liked, had he not been ſhocked on his arrival at the pale cheek and emaciated form of his daughter; who throwing herſelf into his arms, with her face bathed in tears, declared in broken and ſcarcely intelligible accents, that ſhe ſhould henceforward look for no other protector on earth but himſelf.

Lord Delavere was much affected, for he tenderly loved his daughter; but he knew not how deeply ſhe felt this cruel diſappointment;—nor had ſhe any thoroughly ſympathetic breaſt, into which ſhe could pour her affliction. Her brother, a few years older than herſelf,

ſelf, to whom ſhe was infinitely dear, had been for ſome time abroad, and the period of his return was uncertain; and indeed much as ſhe required the conſolation of his friendſhip and affection, knowing the extreme quickneſs of his feelings, ſhe could not but rejoice, that his abſence ſecured her againſt the poſſibility of his calling Derville to an account for the failure of her happineſs —an idea, that of all others, ſhe moſt dreaded.

Above a year had paſſed ſince this event; during which Derville never took the trouble, to attempt vindicating himſelf in lady Caroline's opinion, and was then ſuddenly married to another woman. Lord Belmour had returned late in the following ſpring, and the

particular

particular circumſtances relative to his ſiſter and Derville having been at her earneſt requeſt withheld from him, he attributed the melancholy and languor, by which he at times ſaw her oppreſſed, in a great meaſure to the conſequences of mere ill-health, an idea ſhe always endeavoured to encourage.

Both lady Caroline and her brother were glad to leave London, the former to avoid the ſight of Derville, which ſhe often found her reſolution fail her in accompliſhing while inhabiting the ſame town, and the latter wiſhing to ſeek the peaceful and romantic ſcenes of Belmour caſtle; diſguſted with the world, from the diſappointments his too ſenſible heart, and too ardent imagination, had met with; although placed by fortune

fortune in that envied ſphere, in which he was formed to ſhine a real ornament. It was towards duſk when they arrived—the evening, after an uncommonly hot day, was calm and ſerene, and the odour and freſhneſs of the numerous *parterres* of flowers, which in the old ſtate of gardening ſurrounded two *jet-d'-eaux* immediately at the back of the caſtle, conſpired to charm and tranquilize the ſenſes.

Belmour, his mind occupied by many painful reflections, ſtrolled out alone, ſcarcely knowing which way he went.—He continued for ſome time walking ſlowly under a long avenue of trees, that led from the caſtle, on the ſide of a part of which, and cloſely adjoining, was a ſmall ſtrip of garden belonging

longing to the rector of the parish.—Just as he came to this garden, he was rouzed from the deep reverie, into which he had fallen, by sounds, which, he thought, were not wholly unknown to him, and which seemed the sweetest, that had ever reached his ear.—He heard a soft female voice go through a favourite Italian ballad, with the most touching expression. The well-known words were melancholick, and brought a thousand recollections to his mind; while the plaintive tone, in which they were uttered, appeared to sympathize with his own feelings.—He stopped, and listened with astonishment; at the same time looking through the boughs, which in places were but thinly spread, he discovered a woman sitting, half reclined, on a bench of turf, with her back

back towards him.—Juſt as ſhe ended the air, Belmour's dog, who had followed him, and was hunting among the ſhrubs near, came running by him barking loudly—ſhe turned her head towards the noiſe, but appeared not to ſee Belmour, and getting up walked ſlowly away.

It was too dark for him to diſtinguiſh the perſon's face; but the tall, ſlender, and uncommonly elegant form, that he ſaw moving on before his eyes, filled him with ſurpriſe and admiration.—He remained for ſome time nearly on the ſame ſpot, in hopes of catching another glimpſe of the figure, but at laſt concluded that the perſon he had ſeen was gone towards the rector's houſe, and it being then almoſt dark, he thought it impro-

bable ſhe ſhould return.—He walked on however ſome way down the avenue, and failed not, after turning again towards the caſtle, to peep anxiouſly, though in vain, through the boughs, as he repaſſed the rector's garden.

When he got near the caſtle, he could not help ſmiling at himſelf, for by that time his imagination had been ſo deeply at work, and had painted to him in the ſame being a mind ſo ſuitable to the graceful form, which had preſented itſelf to his ſight, that a fancied intereſt had almoſt taken place in his mind, of which he thought his heart no longer capable.

On his return to the caſtle, at the bottom of the great ſtaircaſe he ſaw one

one of lady Caroline's maids, who ſaid, that her lady had had one of her bad fainting fits, and was already gone to reſt.—Belmour therefore ſupped *tête-à-tête* with his father, who was occupied in talking to him on buſineſs; this, and a ſort of awkwardneſs, which he felt in beginning the ſubject, prevented his making any inquiry concerning the perſon he had ſeen in the garden, which he had intended doing—but he deferred all inquiry till the next morning, when he propoſed to himſelf to call upon the rector, and concluded he ſhould there receive full information.

The next morning, having riſen early, as it was his cuſtom, he had thought the time would never come,

when he might with propriety make his viſit at the rectory, and was walking to and fro in the great hall, with his watch in his hand, when his father paſſing that way, and ſeeing him from the end of the hall, called to him, and, full of a new alteration he was going to make in one of the apartments, taking him by the arm, kept talking to him, and conſulting him about what was to be done, for above an hour.

When Belmour at laſt got to the rector's, a maid opened the door, and ſaid that her maſter was juſt gone out. —'When would he return?'—ſhe 'could not ſay,'—and indeed looked ſo ſtupid, and ſo frightened, that Belmour gave up all hopes of gaining any intelligence from her;—and not being

in

in the habit of calling upon the rector, an ignorant vulgar man, whom he did not ſee five times in a ſummer, except on public days at the caſtle, Belmour could not, without particularity, think of returning to make him a ſecond viſit on the ſame day. Repaſſing the great hall of the caſtle, where in ſummer they often dined, he obſerved two additional covers, which on inquiry he found to be for captain Plumewell and captain Daſh, two officers quartered in the adjoining town, who having come to pay a morning viſit at the caſtle, had been invited to dinner by his father.—Belmour felt, that he could willingly have diſpenſed with any additional company—his ſiſter was low and unwell, and his own mind occupied, not only by many bitter remembrances of

events ſtill painful, but by ſome views for his future eſtabliſhment in life, which his father had of late preſſed with more than uſual anxiety, and of which he himſelf ſaw the reaſonable advantage.

In this diſpoſition of mind he ſat down to table, covering as well as he could the thoughtful reverie, into which he was every moment falling, by that politeneſs and eaſe of manners, which were peculiar to himſelf.—In the midſt of dinner Belmour was rouzed from one of theſe moments of thought by the ſharp tone of captain Daſh's voice, who ſuddenly laying down his knife and fork, and addreſſing himſelf to lord Delavere, ſaid—'Pray, my lord, has 'your lordſhip ſeen the *wonder*, our

'new

'new beauty?—but I forgot, your 'lordſhip has not yet been here a 'Sunday, and ſhe only appears at 'church, he! he! he!—the rector 'locks her up on week days.'—Lord Delavere, with a gentle inclination of his head, replied that he *might* not have ſeen the beauty in queſtion, if he *had* been longer in the country, unleſs ſhe had deigned to pay her devotions at his chapel.—'O Lord! beg a thou-'ſand pardons, my lord,—I forgot the 'chapel in the caſtle—but never was 'there ſo handſome a'——'dowdy,' interrupted Plumewell, eying with complacency his own trim perſon.—'Yes, yes,' reſumed Daſh, '*dowdy* 'as much as you pleaſe, but any thing 'more beautiful I never beheld.'—Lord Belmour, now all attention, inter-

rupted them in a tone, that, however gentle, commanded a ſerious anſwer.—Upon this Daſh, impatient to tell the ſtory, ſilenced his companion, and proceeded to acquaint lord Belmour with all he knew on the ſubject, which was, that a beautiful young woman, whoſe dreſs was uncommonly plain, had appeared on the Sunday before the laſt in the rector's pew, where indeed ſhe had been ſeen before, but not by them, as they had only lately changed their quarters to where they were—that every body was anxious to know who ſhe was, but that nobody could find out; and that *he himſelf* had failed in the attempt, and, notwithſtanding repeated queſtions, all he could get out of the rector, whom he ſaid he never ſuſpected before of *ſtanding a ſiege*, was, that ſhe

was

was with him upon a visit, but as for *who* she was, or *whence* she came, there was no getting a word from him, or *even* from his wife, and still less from the young lady herself, whom he had, he said, accompanied, as it seemed rather against her will, almost half way from the church door to the rector's, till it began to pour with rain, without ever getting beyond a 'yes,' or a 'no,'—that he 'thought it d—d 'odd,'' but he "believed, upon his 'honour, that she kept from church 'the last Sunday *for fear of being ad-* 'mired.'

'Pray let us endeavour at least to 'see this *wonder*,' interrupted the earl, smiling.—'Belmour,' said he, turning to his son, 'I really have some

'buſineſs with the rector, as you 'know; and it would be but a right 'thing for us, to invite him and his 'wife to dinner, for I know not when 'I can name a time for our public 'days to begin; and we will not for-'get, *and their company*, on the card, 'that we may make ſure of the young 'lady.—Theſe gentlemen, I truſt, will 'do us the honour to meet them.'—Plumewell and Daſh bowed low—the neceſſary order was then given for the invitation, and the day named for the following Saturday.

After the company were gone in the evening, lady Caroline remarked to her brother, as they were ſitting together in the garden, how odd the account was, which the officers had given of the young

young woman, and wondered who it poſſibly could be—The rector and his wife, ſhe obſerved, had neither children nor relations, that ſhe ever had ſeen with them, and were beſides ſo vulgar themſelves, that nothing at all like what had been deſcribed could poſſibly in any way belong to them.

Belmour, on this, recounted to her the *viſion* he had ſeen on the preceding evening—he ſpoke with ſo much deſcriptive warmth and energy, that it extracted a ſmile from his ſiſter.—'What 'can you mean?' ſaid he, colouring, '—Ah! my deareſt brother,' replied ſhe, gently preſſing his hand, 'beware 'of romance—remember the views of 'a father ever moſt kind to us—his 'earneſt wiſh to ſee one of us at leaſt

'ſettled,' (here a tear ſtarted into her eye) 'and his project, to which you 'certainly have *liſtened* of late, if not '*conſented*'—'But my dear ſiſter,' ſaid he, recovering himſelf, 'what can 'make you ſo ſerious?—can you 'poſſibly ſuppoſe me ſo ridiculous?—'alas!' added he, mournfully 'the 'too ſenſible diſappointments of *my* 'heart tend rather, I fear, to baneful 'apathy, than to the chance of any 'new or lively intereſt.'—Here they were interrupted by the voice of lord Delavere, who called to lady Caroline, to come in and make his tea, and their converſation was not again renewed that evening.

CHAP. II.

In ſpite of the way in which Belmour had anſwered his ſiſter, what ſhe had ſaid did not fail to make an impreſſion on his mind.—The warmth with which he had ſpoken in deſcribing his adventure, and ſtill more what he had felt, made him appear almoſt ridiculous in his own eyes—The two following days, which preceded the Saturday, although he did frequently walk by the rector's garden, and once or twice thought he ſaw the ſame figure at a diſtance through the trees, he made no attempts to ſee more of her; and when the Saturday came, had by that time half perſuaded

ſuaded himſelf, that he was indifferent whether or not he even ſaw her at all, *certain* that he *ſhould* ſee her, he began to believe, that his imagination, aſſiſted by the duſk of the evening, and her unexpected appearance, had deceived him; and that moſt of the ideal charm would ſhortly vaniſh, and ſome, at beſt, *ordinary beauty*, preſent herſelf to his ſight.

A little before the hour of dinner the company were aſſembled in the drawing-room, when, ſoon after, the rector and his wife were announced.—all eyes were inſtantly directed towards the door, when in *rolled* the ſmug, fat parſon, grinning from ear to ear, preceded by his wife, curteſying all round to the very chairs, which ſhe ſeemed in her

her confuſion to take for lords and ladies—but in vain they expected the young ſtranger would follow.—The diſappointment was general.—Belmour bit his lips, and could ſcarcely command himſelf ſufficiently, to be commonly civil—all his curioſity, and all his intereſt in the ſtranger returned, as the expectation of ſeeing her vaniſhed.—The earl, making a few ſteps forward, ſaid—'but we were in hopes you 'would have brought your company '—the young lady, of whom we 'have heard wonders.'—'Much 'obliged to your lordſhip,' ſaid the parſon, 'yes, my lord—no, my lord, 'could not perſuade her, my lord—'never yet got her to go any where 'but to church, *that*, my lord, you 'know is quite in *my way*,' this he

ſeemed

ſeemed to think a prodigiouſly good joke, and laughed at it himſelf immoderately.—Here the inquiry would for the preſent have ended, had not Daſh, who thought himſelf now backed by lord Delavere, ſkipped up, and with a look that expreſſed, you *dare* not *now* refuſe me, ſaid—'But pray, doctor, who is 'this ſtranger?'—'Stranger!" replied he, 'almoſt as much a ſtranger 'to *me*, as ſhe can be to *you*, captain, 'know very little of the young perſon.—Doctor Stanmore, an old friend 'of mine, who helped me to this living, by ſaying a good word to the 'biſhop for me, begged that my wife 'and I would give her a lodging for 'ſome time, as his parſonage was 'painting and repairing, that's all.'

At

At this moment dinner was announced, much too intereſting an event to Mr. Rycot, for him any longer to attempt even a ſecond joke, or attend to one word, either Daſh or any other perſon could poſſibly ſay to him.—During dinner, though ſeveral trials were made, little was got out of the rector or his wife reſpecting the young ſtranger, but that her name was Melville. The former was too much occupied by the excellence of the dinner, and the latter wholly taken up by the honour of having been thus invited in private, as ſhe had never dined at the caſtle before but on public days.—There was, moreover, evidently ſomething like myſtery, which the earl was too polite, and indeed too indifferent, to attempt penetrating; and

Belmour,

Belmour, from the fear of saying more than he intended, avoided any further inquiry, or even conversation on the subject.—Dash and Plumewell kept up a continual joke about friars, novices, and convents, at which nobody laughed but themselves, and which never advanced them a step further towards the information they wished to obtain.

The dinner over, and the company gone, Belmour took his evening-walk as usual, along the avenue, that led by the rector's garden—out of humour with every thing, and every body—all seeming combined in the most teasing manner, to delay the gratification of his curiosity; and still more out of humour with himself for the eagerness of that curiosity,

curiosity, which, although he could not conquer, he was determined not to indulge.—Belmour, though he had never been exercised in the school of *worldly* adversity, yet, as his heart was warm and passionate, his nature confident, open, and generous, a delicacy of sentiment, ill suited to the commerce of a false and selfish world, had early taught him to suffer, and given him a degree of command over himself, which is rarely the portion of the fortunate.—Just as he got back to the door of the castle, he was met by his sister with an open letter in her hand, which announced, as she said, the arrival of lady Clementina Alton for the next day.—It was then nearly dark, which prevented her in part from seeing the chagrin too visible on Belmour's

countenance

countenance at this news, but perceiving that he anſwered coldly, ſhe added, ‘—My dear brother, you know her ‘coming a little ſooner *can* make no ‘difference—and then our aunt comes ‘with her, ſurely nothing can appear ‘leſs particular—but, for Heaven's ‘ſake! if you *do* diſlike it, take no ‘notice to my father.—I have fancied ‘him not quite well of late, and no‘thing would hurt him ſo much, as the ‘idea of diſtreſſing you on this ſubject ‘—beſides, I am certain, that he knew ‘no more of her coming to-morrow ‘than I did myſelf, which was not till ‘I opened the letter I have here, ‘which ſhe ſent on by *La Croix*, from ‘the inn where ſhe ſleeps—'Tis juſt ‘one of Clementina's freaks!—I ſup‘poſe ſhe found ſome ball dull, or the

‘new

'new opera too long!—for ſhe has 'not the leaſt idea of my father's 'wiſhes; if ſhe had, for aught I know, 'this might be the laſt place, to which 'ſhe would direct her flighty ſteps.'

To this Belmour made no anſwer, but went up ſtairs to his father, who he fancied looked paler than uſual: this, with what his ſiſter had ſaid, was more than ſufficient, to make him curb his own ſenſe of vexation at what he had juſt learned.—He inquired with anxiety of his father, how he found himſelf, and then talked of lady Clementina's ſudden intended arrival as of a matter of indifference.—Lord Delavere's eyes gliſtened, and his look tacitly thanked his ſon for a delicacy of attention, which was not loſt upon him.

On

On the day following, towards the middle of dinner, lady Clementina's carriage was heard clattering through the courts of the caſtle.—Lord Delavere made his ſon a ſign, who flew immediately to hand her out—ſhe was accompanied by her aunt lady Eliza, an unmarried ſiſter of lord Delavere, who had had the care of her education, her parents having died young, by which ſhe had the *misfortune*, for a misfortune it too generally is, to become a very conſiderable heireſs.

As ſhe alighted from the carriage, lord Belmour was ſtruck with her as looking uncommonly handſome, which eſcaped not her obſervation, but ſerved to heighten the youthful glow of health, which ſhe poſſeſſed in an eminent degree,

gree, and added a thouſand playful charms to her naturally ſweet countenance—Her fine fair hair was diſhevelled, and her whole dreſs ſomewhat in diſorder, from the hurry of having riſen at the *early* hour of ten, to be *certain* of arriving at her uncle's in good time for dinner, as ſhe knew, that he did not like late hours in the country.—As Belmour offered his hand, ſhe ſeized his arm, and in a familiar way hurried him along, ſaying—'For Heaven's ſake! 'let us make haſte, I am ſo aſhamed 'of being ſo late—never mind aunt 'Eliza, ſhe will take care of herſelf '—won't you, dear aunt?'

In this manner ſhe entered the dining-room, where ſhe was received by lord Delavere with open arms, who aſſured

aſſured her, that *he* ſhould never complain of the hour, that brought *her* to him.—Seated between the earl and lady Caroline, ſhe diſplayed all the gayety of nineteen, that never yet had known ſorrow.—She declared herſelf '*ſtarving*,' devoured whatever was ſet before her, found every thing 'charming,' every thing 'delightful.'—'London,' ſhe ſaid, 'was grown 'ſo dull, there was no bearing it with 'patience, every body there was ſtupid '—nothing *ſhe* loved ſo much as the 'country!—and now ſhe was *determined* to riſe every morning at ſeven, then ſhe ſhould be ſo well, 'and *look* ſo well next winter—and be 'able to ſit up ten times later at all 'the balls.—What will poor aunt 'Eliza do! but ſhe never minds, for

'she always falls asleep when the first 'dance after supper begins—never was 'so good a *chaperon!* they all envy 'me, for as she never knows what it is 'o'clock, she never wants to go home.' —'Fie, fie! Clementina, how you 'talk!' cried lady Eliza, simpering with delight on her pupil.—It was, indeed, not easy to view her but through the medium of partiality—her faults were those of youth, partaking of the various follies by which it was surrounded, and her native mirth, good nature, and excellent disposition, were yet unsullied by a single self-reproach—she never meant to offend, or knew offence in others but by name—she had hitherto seen the world in all the gayest colours of spring, and had only read of wintry blasts in the fictitious pages of a novel.

CHAP. III.

About a week paſſed without any other occurrence, than the arrival of lord Fenmoſs and Mr. Saunter, two faſhionable admirers of lady Clementina, who, finding their time hang heavily on their hands, as the town began to grow empty from the approach of a general election, claimed a ſlight invitation from the earl, to viſit him in the country. One morning, the reſt of the company having gone out in various carriages to enjoy a view of the ſea, of which the earl was particularly fond, and which was beſt ſeen from a diſtant part of his domain, Belmour alone had remained at home,

home, reading in his room, intending to follow them on horſeback. Having finiſhed his book, he went down ſtairs to replace it in the library. The door happened to be open; he walked thoughtfully on without looking before him, and was half way up the long gallery which contained the books, before he perceived, that there were perſons at the other end. Imagining that they were ſtrangers come to ſee the caſtle, he was retiring with precipitation, when he ſaw the rector come towards him, bowing and making a thouſand excuſes for the 'intruſion,' which he had 'ventured to make, 'thinking,' he ſaid, 'that all the family 'were gone out to take the air, having 'ſeen ſo many of the earl's carriages 'paſs through the village that morn-

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

'ing.'—At the ſame time that he ſaw the rector, Belmour's eye caught a glimpſe of the perſon with him, whom he immediately knew to be the ſame, whoſe figure he had indiſtinctly ſeen in the garden. Her extreme beauty, and the ſoftneſs and dignity of her countenance kept him for ſome time in ſilent admiration. When he had a little recovered from his ſurprize, he deſired that the rector would preſent him.—The young ſtranger had remained on the ſame ſpot without advancing; and when Belmour came up to her, he thought he ſaw a half ſmile on her lips, which ſhe immediately checked, that ſeemed at firſt to indicate ſome former acquaintance, or recollection—yet he was *very* ſure, he never had elſewhere ſeen her. After the uſual compliments

compliments of preſentation were over, ſhe ſeemed diſpoſed to take her leave, and was retiring towards the door, when the rector interpoſed, ſaying, 'Sure, miſs, you will not now run 'away—my lord can tell you the 'names of the portraits, about which 'you were ſo curious.'—Belmour, who on ſeeing her going, had immediately deſpaired of finding any poſſible excuſe to retain her, offered himſelf with eagerneſs as a conductor, to ſhow her any thing ſhe might think worthy of notice in the caſtle—adding, that 'the por-'traits in queſtion, which ſhe ſaw over 'the book-caſe, were family portraits 'merely, and perhaps might be unin-'tereſting to her. — Some of the 'later heads, indeed,' he ſaid, 'were by 'good maſters.' — 'O lord!'—ex-

claimed the rector, interrupting him, 'your lordship's quite mistaken—it 'was these portraits brought miss to 'the castle—thought I never should 'have got her to come—till last night 'she by chance lit on the catalogue, 'explanation, and little history, begun 'in I don't know what king's reign, 'and so downwards—your lordship 'knows—telling the portraits one by 'one, of all your ancestors.—The book 'fell off the shelf, as my wife opened 'the corner cupboard—*whip* miss here 'picked it up, and I thought we never 'should have got her to supper;—'though I don't see why she gave 'herself so much trouble to read, 'for the moment she saw a name, she 'knew all about it better than our 'book could tell her.—This morning

'she

'she was for coming to the castle, when-
'ever I was *sure* the family were all
'out.'—'Well sir', interrupted the young stranger, distressed at the volubility of her companion, 'do not let
'us detain his lordship longer than is
'necessary; since he is so good, I will
'beg to know a few of the portraits,
'that are without written names on
'them, and then we really ought to re-
'turn home, as it is now late.'—Saying this, she kept drawing towards the door, in spite of lord Belmour's wish to delay her, which, however, he seemed afraid of making too evident. After thus gliding along the gallery, she had come to the head of the great staircase, which Belmour was offering her his hand to descend, when a confused sound of voices, and rattling of car-

riages driving up to the door, announced the return of the whole party from their airing.—Lady Clementina was in an inſtant half way up the ſtairs, laughing ready to die—when perceiving the ſtranger handed by lord Belmour, ſhe ſtopped for an inſtant with an expreſſion of the utmoſt aſtoniſhment—then flew up to him, and in a loud whiſper exclaimed—'for Heaven's 'ſake! Belmour, who is that beautiful 'creature? and what are you going to 'do with her?'—The ſtranger now appeared a good deal embarraſſed, but recovering herſelf, bowed with much unaffected dignity, and ſeemed looking for the rector to accompany her home;—but lady Clementina was down ſtairs again in an inſtant, and, hanging on her uncle's arm, inſiſted on his

his making the ſtranger ſtay dinner, ‘—Nay, ſhe had rather have the fat ‘parſon too, than let *her* go—Come, ‘dear uncle, and invite them in your ‘*beſt manner*.’—Lord Delavere was always diſpoſed to do what his dear Clementina wiſhed, and this was, indeed, little more than civility, as the hour of dinner drew near. The rector, thinking his own early dinner long ſince over no ſort of impediment, catched at the propoſal with too much eagerneſs, ſilencing all attempts the young ſtranger could make towards excuſing herſelf, on the plea of his wife's expecting them home, to leave her even a poſſibility of eſcaping. As lady Caroline and lady Clementina were talking to her, lord Fenmoſs ruſhed by, without taking the leaſt notice of

them, upon which lady Clementina again began laughing. His figure, indeed, was truly ludicrous, for he had half a dozen handkerchiefs tied round his throat, and one of the ſervant's great coats on.—'Look at him,' ſaid lady Clementina, 'he thinks it is all over 'with him—he is going to take to his 'bed—was there ever ſo ridiculous 'a mortal!—Mr. Saunter,' ſaid ſhe, 'how could you be ſo cruel!'—'What 'could I do!' replied he careleſsly, as he was lounging up the ſtairs—'it 'was ſo damn'd hot, I could not hold 'the reins any longer—they dropped 'out of my hands, and the curricle 'tipped over juſt in a puddle;—not 'enough, I ſwear, to wet more than the 'end of his toe, though he is in ſuch a 'fright

'fright about catching cold—beſides, 'as I told him, he muſt be uſed to be 'up to his knee in water half the 'year, when he is at his eſtate in Cum-'berland.—Faith! I believe it was '*that* made him ſo curſedly angry, for 'he has done nothing but bounce and 'fly ever ſince.'—They were interrupted by the arrival of major Heartley, an old friend of the family, an officer, who after much ſevere ſervice had retired, with the loſs of an arm, upon half pay, with the conſcious ſatisfaction of having *deſerved* more of his country, than he ever hoped to receive—and enſign Melford, a younger brother of a noble family, who had undergone the *immenſe fatigue* of a campaign abroad, and had returned with all the faſhionable diſguſt for exertions of any ſort, and

moſt particularly ſuch as might endanger his own *elegant* perſon.

In addition to the company above-mentioned, Mr. Mortimer arrived, by invitation, to dinner. He was a near neighbour of lord Delavere's—had been long an humble admirer of lady Caroline; but, conſcious of the little pretenſions *his* rank and fortune could give him to the EARL of DELAVERE's daughter, he was ſtill proud of the ſentiments with which ſhe had inſpired him, and voluntarily nouriſhed a hopeleſs paſſion in his breaſt; endeavouring to content himſelf with ſeeing, from time to time, the object of his admiration.—He was a man of blameleſs character, and amiable manners; but his fortune was ſmall, and his health in early

early youth having been ſuch as to diſable him from following the law (the profeſſion for which he was intended) he had retired into the country with an intention of paſſing the remainder of his life on his own eſtate, a farm of a few hundreds per annum, and abandoning a world, in which he felt little hopes of ſucceſs. His paſſion for lady Caroline confirmed this reſolution; as, without her, he felt all ſituations muſt be nearly equal to him, and ſought, therefore, only to diſpoſe his mind to the quiet enjoyment of the rational purſuits ſtill within his power.

Theſe gentlemen had ſcarcely made their bow, when the dinner bell rang; the earlieſt ſummons lady Clementina

mentina ever obeyed for beginning her toilette, which often was of more than equal duration with the firſt courſe.—That day ſhe declared ſhe would not be a minute; and hurrying away Miſs Melville with her, who ſhe ſaid '*muſt* juſt come and arrange her 'hair,' away ſhe flew, and did actually return as the company were ſitting down to dinner.—Miſs Melville, being a ſtranger, was placed next to lord Delavere, at the head of the table, and every body, as if by common accord, left a ſeat next to lady Clementina vacant for lord Belmour, although he uſually ſat at the bottom of the table.—At firſt he was not ſorry for the change, as it gave him an opportunity of more nearly obſerving Miſs Melville, for whom every inſtant increaſed his admiration

miration and intereſt.—A ſettled melancholy evidently hung on her fine expreſſive countenance—her manners were eaſy and unembarraſſed, and though ſhe ſeemed to caſt an obſervant eye on every thing around her, the uncommon profuſion of magnificent plate, number of attendants, and general elegance, with which the earl's table was ſerved, appeared as things familiar to her, and to excite in her no degree whatever of ſurprize.—Lady Clementina exceeded that day even her uſual flow of ſpirits, and her mirth was much increaſed by ſeveral of the perſons at table.—Lord Fenmoſs, who ſat ſhivering, wrapped up to the chin in a large fur *ſurtout*, as far as poſſible from every door or window, inquiring every moment if the

the phyſician he had ſent for were come, and the *fat parſon*, were to her irreſiſtible ſubjects for laughter. She talked with her innocent freedom continually to lord Belmour, and leaned familiarly towards him, whiſpering and endeavouring to make him partake of her jokes.—She had often *wondered*, that lord Belmour never made love to her—a thing, as ſhe thought, almoſt of courſe, from every man of figure and politeneſs: but ſhe was not in the leaſt offended; ſhe concluded, that one day or other he *would*, but without any further determined idea, or intention of treating him at all differently from the reſt of her many admirers.

Belmour, who wanted wholly to occupy himſelf with obſerving Miſs Melville,

ville, was teaſed and embarraſſed by the inceſſant interruptions of lady Clementina.—He had caught Miſs Melville's eyes, as it ſeemed to him when ſhe thought herſelf unobſerved, turned towards him with an expreſſion of inquiry;—but it might be fancy.—Towards the end of dinner, a diſcuſſion aroſe between Heartley and young Melford, on the advantages and duties of a military life. The former commonly ſupported his opinions with more freedom and warmth than he poſſibly otherwiſe would have done, from a conſciouſneſs of the ſituation in which he might appear to the ill-judging world, who, from his contracted fortune, and his attachment to lord Delavere's family, in whoſe houſe he in a manner lived, might, without further obſervation,

obſervation, ſet him down as a hanger-on, or led-captain, although the real worth and ſpirit of his character inſured him againſt the ſlighteſt degree of perſonal offence from any one.—Melford, after a lively deſcription of the *inſufferable ennui*, attending the *fatigues* of ſervice, looked towards Belmour, as if *certain* he ſhould be ſupported in his argument by *an heir apparent*, who he, of courſe, conceived *could* think nothing bearable but eaſe and amuſement.—'You ſhould 'not,' ſaid Heartley, 'addreſs yourſelf 'to lord Belmour on theſe ſubjects.—'His lordſhip has very different ways of 'thinking, ſince he voluntarily ſought, 'on board one of his majeſty's frigates, 'what I believe *you*, ſir, would have 'thought ſtill harder ſervice than any 'in which you have been engaged.'

Melford,

Melford ſtared ſo long, and with ſuch aſtoniſhment, at lord Belmour, that a general ſilence enſued; and, he, finding ſome explanations of Heartley's ſpeech neceſſary, ſaid careleſsly, but with a ſigh, that he had taken the opportunity of going out with his friend captain Harcourt, who commanded a ſix-and-thirty gun frigate, wiſhing to ſee the manœuvring of a ſhip of war, having formerly wiſhed to follow the profeſſion himſelf.—He did not add, that his friend fell bravely fighting, in one of the moſt brilliant actions of the war, in which he was engaged; and that he, with the courage of a hero, was the firſt who boarded the enemy's veſſel, after the lieutenant had taken the command of the frigate;—and, as a ſerious look

which

which he assumed after he had finished his short account, at the same time offering to help Melford to some dish placed near him, plainly showed, that he chose to put an end to the conversation, no question was asked on the subject.--But Heartley related to the persons who sat next to him the whole in detail, in a whisper loud enough for Miss Melville, who was listening with particular attention, to hear.--'Don't 'listen, Miss,' said the rector, suddenly turning towards her, 'you will be 'frightened.'— Miss Melville's pale cheek was in a moment changed, a deep blush was suffused over her face, and she hastily turned her head the other way, while the rector continued to laugh immoderately at the triumph he thought

thought he had attained in putting her out of countenance.—All this, it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, did not eſcape Belmour, who lamented inwardly the impoſſibility he felt of penetrating at all into the ſenſations excited in Miſs Melville's breaſt, which certainly ſeemed to be both ſtrong and various during the courſe of the dinner.

Early in the evening, though much preſſed to ſtay, Miſs Melville retired, to which the rector conſented with a leſs degree of reluctance, from the extreme impatience he felt, to relate all that he had ſeen, and all that he had heard, in full liberty.

The moment he entered his own houſe, he ran up to his wife, rubbing his

his hands, and chuckling with ſigns of the greateſt exultation.—'I have ſeen 'her,' ſaid he, 'I have ſeen our new 'counteſs, yes *counteſs*, for the earl is 'to be made a marquis—the marquis 'of Belmour, becauſe they have found 'out it's the oldeſt title in the family, 'and lord Belmour is to take the 'ſecond title (I know not what) and 'to be an earl—and they are to be 'married in the caſtle—there's for 'ye!—I got it out of old Worthy, the 'ſteward—that is, he did not deny 'it—and he's as cloſe.—Well, *ſhe is a* '*beauty*, and as gay as a lark, and as 'frolickſome as a doe.—No wonder 'my lord Belmour admires her as he 'does!—Well, they will be the hand-'ſomeſt, ſweeteſt couple—God bleſs 'em, ſay I'.—'My dear,' interrupted

his wife, 'I believe the ale has got 'into your head.'—'Ale! where is 'your fooliſh head!'—he then, to the beſt of his recollection, gave her a catalogue of the different wines that were ſerved at table, of the various diſhes, and a minute deſcription of the plate, and of every ſingle article of magnificence, with an *attempt* to relate all that was ſaid by every one of the company ſeparately.—The whole with a volubility, that at laſt put him ſo completely our of breath, a pauſe of neceſſity enſued;—at which interval, Miſs Melville took an opportunity to ſay, that ſhe felt ſome degree of headach, and ſhould go and take a walk, as the evening was ſo fine.—'Now, what, 'the devil! makes her look ſo *glum!*'—ſaid he, as Miſs Melville ſhut the door—

'but

'but ſome people never *are* pleaſed—'that's ſure enough!'—'Nay, my 'dear,' ſaid his wife, 'don't ſay *that*, 'I am ſure Miſs always ſeems pleaſed 'and ſatisfied with every thing ſhe has 'here, though I often think, I don't 'know why, poor thing! that ſhe has 'been uſed to better fare—and as for 'that, if ſhe does love to ſit ſometimes 'in her own room, why, as they ſay, 'it's nobody's loſs but her own, and 'better than always being in the way, 'like ſome folks!'—'You're a fool, 'Peggy, ſo come along,' ſaid the parſon, twiſting his wig ſtraight, which he had more than half rubbed off in the warmth of his narration, and putting on his hat—'come along, I don't care 'if we *fetch a walk* too, before it's 'quite dark, for, now I think of it, *my*

'head

'head feels a little queer, and the freſh 'air will do me good.'—So ſaying, out he ſtrutted, and ſoon overtook Miſs Melville, who was walking ſlowly before them.—After their return home, the rector was ſhortly quieted, by falling faſt aſleep in his great chair; and Miſs Melville ſat the reſt of the evening at work, little interrupted, as his wife, ſeeing her more than uſually thoughtful and ſerious, did not obtrude her converſation.

CHAP. IV.

FROM the time Miſs Melville had left the caſtle, lady Clementina had talked of nothing but her—her beauty, her manner, and *who* ſhe *could be*—not that it ſignified, ſhe ſaid, *who* anybody was, when they were ſo charming.—'Do, couſin,' ſaid ſhe to lady Caroline, the next morning at breakfaſt, 'do let 'us go and ſee Miſs Melville, it will 'be but civil, and aunt Eliza will go 'with us—ſhe is always *preaching ci-* 'vility to me.'—Lady Caroline, rather gravely, ſaid that ſhe would go with her the next day, but that they *muſt*, that morning, make a viſit another way.

The

The next morning, lady Clementina was down at breakfaſt earlier than uſual, proteſting, that ſhe 'would go that 'morning, to ſee Miſs Melville,' and collecting all thoſe ſhe could to accompany her on her walk; 'for *walk*,' ſhe would, ſhe declared, 'it was ſo near, 'and ſo ſhould lord Fenmoſs, in ſpite 'of the crick in his neck, and Saunter, 'in ſpite of the heat.'—Melford was 'always ready,' he ſaid, '*for expeditions* '*of this ſort*,' and Belmour bowed aſſent—but lord Delavere, at the ſame moment coming into the room, told lady Clementina, that ſhe was welcome to diſpoſe of all the gentlemen that morning except Belmour, who muſt go with him to meet a perſon of buſineſs, who was then waiting for them

at the neighbouring town, at the ſame time making a ſign to Belmour to follow him, as the carriage, he ſaid, was ready.—Belmour, however vexed, had not a word to ſay, and ſtill leſs ventured to oppoſe his father, and object to his propoſition, from ſeeing lady Caroline's eyes fixed upon him, while the earl was ſpeaking.

The reſt of the party, headed by lady Clementina, proceeded, and were joined by Daſh and Plumewell, whom they met in their way—On their arrival, they completely filled the little parlour of the parſonage. The rector was happily *always* at his eaſe; but his wife, what with having that day an uncommonly dirty gown on, and a ragged old

old cap, which ſhe ſqueezed every moment with both her hands—in vain —ſhe felt it never could ſet tolerably— and the want of ſeats for more than half the company, was in a perfect fever.—It ſeemed to her ſo *unlucky*, that the honour of ſuch a viſit ſhould not have come to her on the day before, or on the day after—any day in the whole year, ſhe thought, would have found her leſs unprepared.—Miſs Melville, who was called down ſtairs on the arrival of the company, gave her all the aſſiſtance in her power. She appeared herſelf unembarraſſed. Her manner, indeed, on all occaſions, partook of that eaſe, which obſervation, good ſenſe, and a knowledge of the world, alone can give, and which is equally

ſuited to a court and to a cottage.—This manner was, in Miſs Melville, accompanied by a native modeſty, which gave a gentleneſs and grace to all her actions.

Lady Caroline made lord Delavere's excuſe for not having been able to pay his reſpects to her that morning, but ſaid not a word of her brother.—They afterwards were led into the rector's garden, where lady Caroline took notice of the neatneſs, with which the flowers were tied up, and particularly of an arbour compoſed merely of willow-ſtakes, but a luxuriant honeyſuckle and jeſſamine were entwined over the little arches with ſo much taſte, and ſuch advantage taken of a fine pyracanthus, which grew near and covered

covered the remains of a bit of ruined wall, that it was impoſſible to remark it without admiration.—'All *Miſs*', ſaid the rector, 'all *Miſſes* doing.—'Faith, ſhe has improved this garden 'more in ſix weeks ſince ſhe has been 'with us, than our Jemmy, the gar-'dener, in ſix months—he! he! he!' '—A perfect *Flora,*' ſaid lord Fenmoſs, gliding up to Miſs Melville with a familiar and languiſhing air, who, after this *claſſic* compliment, of which he felt not a little proud, he thought muſt, as a perſon of taſte, be flattered by *his* notice.—Lady Eliza could never view the ſlighteſt attention paid to any but her dear Clementina, without jealouſy, and immediately buſtled up to them in order to interrupt further converſation. Lady Eliza had, moreover,

a particular predilection for lord Fenmoſs, and would willingly have favoured his addreſſes to her niece in preference to thoſe of any other—for of all lady Clementina's admirers *he* was the only one, who ever took the ſlighteſt notice of *her*, or ever appeared to perceive that ſhe exiſted.—*He* would even frequently hand her out of the Opera, rather than lady Clementina; as he knew, that he might keep her ſnugly ſtanding by a warm ſtove, till the carriage was actually at the door; while lady Clementina would unmercifully drag him into the ſtreet, among links and footmen, in the open air, in froſt and ſnow, impatient to proceed to ſome other place of amuſement—or *on purpoſe* to divert herſelf at his expenſe, and laugh at him, as his *dread* of catching

catching cold was a ſtanding joke; and, in addition, his finical dreſs and perſon never failed, on theſe occaſions, to attract the notice of ſome honeſt Engliſh byſtander, whoſe remarks afforded her freſh ſubject for mirth and diverſion.—Then lady Eliza always inquired *ſympathetically* after his health, and recommended *poſſets*, *caudles*, and *conſerves*, and all the pharmaceutical preparations of a lady Bountiful, and, above all, *care of himſelf*, adding, with emphaſis, that 'none of the young men of faſhion 'ſhe ſaw, were *at all like him*.'—All this not only flattered his vanity, but encouraged his hopes of ſucceſs with the *rich heireſs*; a conſideration by no means *indifferent* to his lordſhip: and he thought it well worth while to ſubmit, to be now and then laughed at, for

the chance of a great fortune, and imagined thus cunningly to outwit his antagoniſts.

After having hurried all over the rector's houſe and garden, inſiſting on ſeeing every thing, and ſo good humouredly *admiring* every thing, that it was impoſſible to be angry with her, lady Clementina returned with her followers to the caſtle, not without having made ſeveral attempts to perſuade Miſs Melville, to accompany her thither, and paſs the day—but this ſhe civilly declined.

Lady Caroline, at their return home, found herſelf ſo unwell, that, unable to dine below ſtairs, ſhe immediately retired to her own apartment.—Belmour and his father arrived at the door, juſt

as the reſt of the company were ſitting down to table, after having waited for a conſiderable time, every moment in expectation of their arrival, their buſineſs having detained them later than they ſuppoſed.

The dinner over, Belmour inquired for his ſiſter, whom he found ſtill alone in her room.—He had ſcarcely had time to expreſs his anxiety about her health, when ſhe interrupted him by aſking what could have happened, and why he had an appearance of ſo much agitation.—'I was not aware of my 'looks,' ſaid he, 'nor did I mean, at 'this time, when I find you ſo low and 'ſo oppreſſed, to have troubled you 'with any thing merely relative to 'myſelf—but leſt you ſhould think

'this ſomething worſe than it really is, I 'will tell you, that my father, during 'the whole of our long drive, has been 'preſſing me with more than uſual 'earneſtneſs, nay, with eagerneſs little 'ſhort of violence, on the ſubject of 'my marriage, claiming a *promiſe* which certainly I never made, never could 'make, never *will* make,' ſaid he, riſing and walking haſtily about the room.—'Why ſhould I voluntarily 'poiſon the remainder of a life, which 'has not hitherto been happy!'— 'My dear brother!' ſaid lady Caroline, with a half reproving tone—'no,' he replied, 'I repeat it, my life has not 'been happy.—It is not on ſituation 'that happineſs depends, but on the 'mind's-being adapted to that ſituation '(whatever it may be) in which it is 'placed.—

'placed.—Mine was not so.—Fortune,
'it is true, seemed to smile on me—
'but my heart was often at the mo-
'ment agitated by anxiety, or torn
'with grief and disappointment;—de-
'ceived, cruelly deceived, in the object
'of my early affection, I have since
'wandered vainly about, seeking to
'curb, nay, extinguish those very
'feelings and sensations, that I know
'might have made me blessed.—No,
'no,'!—continued he with much agi-
tation—'if I ever *do* marry, it *shall* at
'least be a woman of sense, one by
'whose judgment my own can be
'both flattered and corrected.—I will
'not marry a girl, a child—nay, *if* I
'love her, my own reason must con-
'demn the folly of such a passion.—
'What have I not already sacrificed to

'my

'my father!—My diſpoſition led me
'to the choice of an active life, and
'from what fatal errors might I not
'have been ſaved, had I been allowed
'a rational and ſerious occupation!—
'I wiſhed, earneſtly wiſhed, to have
'followed the profeſſion of the navy—
'to have accompanied a loved and va-
'lued friend in the ſame purſuit.—*He*
'fell!' (here Belmour's eyes were filled
with tears)—'in this my father ſtre-
'nuouſly oppoſed me.'—'I was an only
'ſon,' he ſaid,—'I knew myſelf inde-
'pendant—His *commands* I might have
'reſiſted—his *entreaties* I could not!—
'In politics, again, with the idea at
'leaſt of being in ſome meaſure ſer-
'viceable to my country—my youth-
'ful ardour would, in a general line of
'conduct, have prompted me to follow

'as a leader that *one* bright genius *,
'on whose *heart* I could repose, should
'his *judgment* on any occasion for a
'moment fail him.—*He* was in opposi-
'tion.—*Ministry*, my father insisted,
'*must* always be supported, and he had
'private obligations, as he said, more-
'over, that rendered that support, in
'the present case, indispensable to
'him;—in short, every view, every
'prospect he could form, would have
'been frustrated by my retaining on
'this subject the privilege *to think for*
'*myself*.—Endless disputes would have
'arisen, or a coldness have taken place
'between us, which, from a really kind
'and affectionate father, my heart
'never could have supported.—But to
'become

* Honourable Charles James Fox.

'become the humble ſervant of *any*, and
'*every* miniſter, and blindly to ſupport
'his meaſures, I never could ſubmit—
'againſt *that* every honeſt principle
'within my breaſt recoils.—I determin-
'ed, therefore, wholly to abandon poli-
'tics.—To this compromiſe my father,
'not without ſome difficulty, conſented
'—but, accuſtomed to conceſſion on my
'part, if in this inſtance he expect obe-
'dience, I fairly and openly declare, that
'he will find himſelf miſtaken.—I
'know all his prejudices, yet ſhould
'never, I think, be led to offend him in
'my choice; but no power on earth
'ſhall compel me, to ſhackle myſelf
'for life, without even a poſſible
'hope of future comfort or happi-
'neſs.'

Lady

Lady Caroline had remained ſilent —the image of Derville wholly occupied her mind from the moment Belmour uttered the words 'deceived by 'the object of my early affection:' it was too forcible an appeal to her own heart!—But by this time, endeavouring to recover herſelf, ſhe attempted to ſay ſomething in favour of lady Clementina; as her father had entreated her to uſe her influence, to aſſiſt in perſuading her brother to a marriage he had ſo much at heart; and in which, indeed, ſhe herſelf thought ſhe ſaw many ſerious advantages.—'Sure-'ly,' ſaid ſhe, 'Clementina is uncom-'monly handſome, and, ſetting apart 'her high birth, her being an heireſs, 'and her near connection with us, 'always an agreeable circumſtance, as

'it

'it avoids the inconvenience of a 'thouſand new, and, ten to one, 'troubleſome relations, I cannot, when 'I look round, ſee any young per- 'ſon to compare to her — ſhe is 'ſo amiable! ſo good-natured! and 'I am ſure, ſince ſhe has been 'here, ſhe ſeems pleaſed with every 'thing.'—'Yes,' interrupted Belmour with ſome vehemence, 'pleaſed with 'every thing, and with every body.— 'You are perfectly in the right, ſiſter, 'but I muſt tell you, that, in my opi- 'nion, ſuch perſons are more to be 'avoided in a ſerious connection, even 'than thoſe who are *pleaſed with* 'nothing.—At leaſt, they ſuit neither 'my temper nor diſpoſition, except 'for a common acquaintance, what- 'ever others may think of them.—And

'this

'this is *really* the ſtrangeſt fancy 'in you *all*, to perſecute me about a 'girl, that I am perſuaded never caſt 'away a more ſerious thought upon 'me, than on Fenmoſs, Saunter, or 'any other man, that could hand her 'out of an Opera, or would dance 'a country-dance with her!—But I 'am too warm,' ſaid he, 'I flurry you 'now you are ill: forgive me, my 'deareſt ſiſter, forgive me,' he repeated, in the moſt affectionate tone, 'let 'us drop this ſubject for the preſent, 'I will leave you, and come again 'by and by, if you ſtill remain in 'your room.'—Saying this, he left his ſiſter—went precipitately down ſtairs, and directly out of the gate, bending his hurried ſteps towards a wood at ſome diſtance from the caſtle, backed

by

by craggy rocks, which overlooked the ſea—a favourite walk of Belmour's, where he paſſed many a ſolitary hour, ſometimes fixing his eyes in ſilent admiration on the vaſt expanſe before him, ſometimes loſt in endleſs reverie.—Alone here, and ſecure from interruption, as the agitation of his mind, from his recent converſation with his ſiſter, began to ſubſide, a thouſand recollections crowded on his imagination.—The quiet ſtillneſs of the evening, indeed, led inſenſibly to thought and reflection; no ſound reached the ear, but the gentle murmur of the ebbing tide on the ſands beneath; the ſea was ſmooth as glaſs, and the diſtant little barks ſcarcely ſeemed to move on its ſurface.—The ſun, veiled in a light miſt, was now already drawing near

near to the horizon; and the whole ſurrounding ſcene was ſuch, as, on a mind like Belmour's, could not fail to make a ſenſible impreſſion. Yet he felt not half the ſoothing charm;—no *one* beloved object now filled and occupied his heart.—Young as he was, the airy phantoms of imaginary bliſs had long vaniſhed from his ſight; and, in their place, appeared to his maturer judgment no flattering hope of more rational enjoyments, ſuch as tempered by reaſon could ſatisfy a mind like his, tender, delicate, and ſuſceptible in the extreme, yet confident, open, and generous.—

When lord Belmour, not then one-and-twenty, returned firſt from his travels, he came into what is called *the world*, with every poſſible advantage nature

or

or ſituation could give.—The grace of his uncommonly fine figure was heightened by all the elegance of dreſs, and by the moſt poliſhed manners; and while his native ſpirit and approved courage made him not leſs feared than envied by the men, he was courted and idolized by the women.—But to vanity, that could flatter neither his underſtanding nor his heart, he was little ſenſible; and although his youth and paſſions led him for ſome time to follow, without reſtraint, the impetuous torrent of diſſipation and pleaſure, yet, as his mind was naturally both of a ſerious and thoughtful turn, even in the midſt of that perpetual vortex, which is termed *ſociety* in London, he ſtill found moments to indulge his love of reading, and the cultivation of his mind; for Belmour not only left

Eton

Eton and the Univerſity the allowed beſt ſcholar, but had never diſcontinued his purſuits in claſſical learning, and in every other ſpecies of elegant literature.—Such moments, indeed, were for ſome time ſhort and interrupted; but he ſoon grew diſguſted with the inſipid buſtle of general ſociety; his head, not leſs than his heart, requiring ſome more real occupation and intereſt.—The profligate diſcourſe of his young companions he never could ſupport with patience; and as his known ſpirit always made him feared, he ſhortly became a reſtraint upon them; which circumſtance, as he could not fail to perceive it, rendered their company at beſt but dull and inſipid to him.—In this ſtate of mind he firſt began to diſtinguiſh lady Roſeberg, and to ſeek every opportunity

portunity of expreſſing his reſpectful admiration of her, for ſuch indeed it was.—He believed her, what ſhe appeared, all that was amiable, all that was virtuous, and approached her with a reverence little ſhort of that due to a divinity;—for though he had followed the allurements of pleaſure, his heart was uncorrupted, and he attributed the ſucceſs, he had hitherto met with among women, to their too great facility, not to indiſcriminate vice, and ſtill leſs to his own merit.

Lady Roſeberg was then at the very pinnacle of faſhion, admired and reſpected.—She had been married at ſixteen, as it was ſuppoſed againſt her inclination, to lord Roſeberg, who, beſides being above ſixty, was in his appearance

pearance diſguſting, and his underſtanding and manners were by no means calculated to redeem the faults of his perſon; but he had an immenſe eſtate entirely in his own power, no children by a former marriage, and offered *carte blanche* as to ſettlements. —Miſs Rayfield had not ſixpence in the world; and the affairs of Sir Samuel Rayfield, her father, were ſo involved in ſome Eaſt-India tranſactions, not much to his credit, that from him ſhe had nothing to expect; and his only hopes for her future eſtabliſhment, were to be derived from the bargain made in conſideration of her youth and powerful charms.—Lord Roſeberg appeared to both the very perſon on earth beſt adapted to their purpoſe.

Miſs Rayfield, on her part, had ſo well profited by the maxims of her father, aſſiſted by certain intuitive principles, inherent in her own breaſt, that ſhe ſaw in perſpective all the advantages ſhe might derive from ſuch a marriage; and was little leſs anxious for its accompliſhment on the firſt overtures made by his lordſhip, than her prudential and calculating father. The marriage was therefore ſhortly concluded, and, as the whole of the buſineſs had paſſed in the country, where at a race-ball ſhe had been ſeen, admired, and followed by the enamoured peer, ſhe made her appearance for the firſt time on the theatre of faſhion in London, in the character of *a victim*, cruelly ſacrificed to age and uglineſs, and was almoſt as univerſally pitied, as ſhe was univerſally admired.

She

She was received with kindneſs and attentions even by lord Roſeberg's family, for though they would rather he had not married at all, as they all thought that unavoidable, they were well ſatisfied that he had not fallen a prey to ſomething much worſe, as he was known all his life to have been led by *ſome* woman—and indeed to be the certain dupe of almoſt *any* woman, that would take the trouble to impoſe on him by cajoling and flattery: yet the taſk was not eaſy, as the narrowneſs of his mind rendered him ſuſpicious, and his total dependance on others for amuſement and occupation, fretful and diſcontented.—But once thoroughly lulled into a ſecurity, in which he found his own eaſe, and conſtant attention to humour his every trifling ca-

price and fancy, there was little to fear from his penetration.

Lady Roſeberg had not naturally a vicious character—ſhe was good-natured and compaſſionate; and, perhaps, under other circumſtances than thoſe in which ſhe was placed, might in ſome meaſure have really merited the reſpect and conſideration ſhe for a long time obtained from the world; but an exceſſive love of pleaſure, and a too great facility in its gratification, proved her ruin, and finally overſet all the barriers her good ſenſe, prudence, and judgment, had oppoſed to it's violence.—She ceaſed wholly to reſpect herſelf, and ſhortly after loſt the reſpect ſhe vainly hoped by art and duplicity to extort from others. When Belmour became

attached

attached to her, ſhe was in the zenith of her charms; her conduct to her lord had appeared exemplary, and ſcarcely was the voice of calumny heard louder than a whiſper againſt her. Young men, it is true, were always of her ſociety—but her manner to them was eaſy and unconſtrained, and the firſt ſtep to admiſſion into her houſe, was by proper attentions to her huſband—and though ſhe followed the full torrent of faſhionable amuſements, went late to every place, and came late from every place, it was always in company with women of approved character and reputation, near relations of her lord, or ſuch as in themſelves, according to the opinion of the world, could but be of advantage to her. In private ſociety, ſhe never was known to ſhew either a

ſhadow of diſguſt or contempt for her huſband.—Some indeed were of opinion, that in her manner to him ſhe carried this forbearance too far the other way, and *muſt* have reaſons for thus affecting, what could not be ſincere.—Be this as it may, ſhe had by her prudence gained a degree of conſideration, which, united to her youth, beauty, and captivating manner, rendered her the moſt followed and moſt admired woman in the bright circle of faſhion.

Belmour came an humble ſuppliant to this ſhrine of perfection—he had hitherto admired lady Roſeberg only at a diſtance, but now took an opportunity of being preſented to her, as one deſirous of being admitted to her ſociety. In conſequence he left his name

with

with her husband, with whom, from his naturally agreeable manners, he soon became so great a favourite, that lord Roseberg was always inviting him to dinner, and soon grew scarcely to be easy, if he passed a day without seeing him. This so well suited Belmour's growing passion for lady Roseberg, that he willingly submitted to all the *ennui* of his conversation; and, whenever he could flatter himself, that it was not absolutely disagreeable to her, accepted his invitations. For some time she seldom herself invited him, except to her assemblies; and lord Roseberg at last became peevish at the omission, and asked her, 'why she invited a pack of impertinent 'coxcombs every day, who had neither 'common sense, nor common civility 'for *him*, and neglected lord Belmour,

'becauſe he was *his friend?*'—She aſſured him, in the gentleſt tone, that ſhe ſhould always invite thoſe, who were moſt pleaſing to *him*;—'you know, my 'deareſt lord, that you chooſe your own 'ſociety, and that *my* firſt ſtudy is to 'make the houſe agreeable to *you.*'—A look of ſelf-complacency and ſatisfaction followed from his lordſhip; he told her, ſhe never looked handſomer, that her head-dreſs became her, aſked her if ſhe had not of late been unlucky at play, put a note of two hundred pounds into her hand, and then limped down to his own apartment, in the moſt perfect harmony of temper, begging her not to 'hurry herſelf,' or come home a moment ſooner than ſhe liked on his account.—Theſe, or ſcenes like theſe, paſſed daily, and lord Roſeberg

was

was perſuaded, that no man ever was ſo much maſter in his own houſe as himſelf.

Lady Roſeberg, to whom Belmour from the firſt was by no means indifferent, which indeed had been the cauſe of her redoubled caution, now ſaw him oftener at home, and allowed him to be one of her conſtant attendants in public —but his real and unaffected paſſion was ſo evident to others, that it obliged her to greater reſerve and appearance of indifference to him, than ſhe ſhewed to moſt of her followers.—This, poor Belmour conſtrued into diſapprobation of his attachment; and he was frequently tempted, in deſpair, wholly to relinquiſh a ſociety, in which he often experienced ſo much pain and mortification—but

as ſhe never loſt ſight of him, and carefully watched theſe workings of his heart, a ſmile, a look were ſufficient to recall him ten times more her captive than before.

Still the taſk on her ſide was difficult.—He was young, and though his honour, ſhe thought, might be truſted, his conduct might be imprudent.—She knew him to be quick, and believed him jealous—and then his enthuſiaſtic admiration of her *virtues*, much *alarmed* her—What would be the conſequence, ſhe reflected, if he ever diſcovered her *leſs rigid* principles!—Yet he was not to be given up—*this*, paſſion had already forbidden in her own breaſt. Thus the remainder of the winter paſſed, and her lord had named his day for leaving London,

London, with an intention of paſſing the early part of the ſummer at his villa, whither ſhe meant, according to a little plan ſhe had formed, that Belmour ſhould be invited, but *not* by *herſelf*. Lord Roſeberg, ſhe was certain, would inſiſt on Belmour's being of the party. —To him, therefore, ſhe tacitly left the invitation, reſerving to herſelf not to *forbid* his coming, when he ſhould in confidence aſk her leave; as, on all occaſions of this ſort, ſhe well knew, that ſhe might depend upon his delicacy, and that he would rather avoid her ſight, than riſk offending her; but, as it often happens to thoſe even of the moſt conſummate art, ſhe this time carried her policy a ſtep too far.

Belmour was at her houſe one evening, only a few days before her intended

departure; when lord Roſeberg, who had ſeveral times before mentioned the ſubject to him in general terms, now particularly and directly invited him, and requeſted him earneſtly to accompany them out of town. Lady Roſeberg, who was ſtanding cloſe by them at the moment, affected not to hear what her huſband had ſaid, but, with an air of careleſſneſs, turned round and walking up to a groupe of men who were talking together in the middle of the room, began laughing with the greateſt appearance of indifference. Belmour, who was quite ſure ſhe had from the beginning heard every word lord Roſeberg ſaid, and who was anxiouſly watching her countenance, in order to diſcover whether or not he might venture to accept an offer, that gratified his every wiſh, was ſo much vexed

vexed and diſappointed at her manner, which argued, it ſeemed to him, ſomething even beyond indifference, that after muttering a few indiſtinct expreſſions of thanks to lord Roſeberg for his invitation, and caſting a look of anger and mortification at her, he ſuddenly left the room—went home, and ordered horſes to be ready for him at a very early hour the next morning, in order to leave town. But whither to go, he ſcarcely knew—his mind was in a ſtate of reſtleſs agitation—he then recollected, that the friend of his earlieſt youth, and, though a few years older than himſelf, for ſome time his ſchool companion, captain Harcourt, who commanded a ſix and thirty gun frigate, was juſt now at Plymouth.—Thither Belmour went, and found relief for his oppreſſed

oppreſſed heart, in the warm and ſincere expreſſions of attachment of the honeſt tar, who, though he knew not the refinements of modern and ſophiſticated gallantry, could pity the real ſufferings of his friend.

Not long after Belmour's arrival at Plymouth, captain Harcourt was ordered out on a cruiſe. Belmour was delighted, on every account, to accompany him. The circumſtances followed already mentioned by Heartley—the impreſſion on Belmour's mind was deep and laſting, he had received the laſt look and dying breath of his friend, who mortally wounded actually fell into his arms.—He was a young man of uncommon expectations; unallied to any thing great or powerful.—He had early

early riſen to the rank of captain, and the command of a frigate by his own perſonal merit and valour.—His character indeed, uniting the moſt enterprizing ſpirit and undaunted courage to every gentle grace of humanity, did honour *even* to that of a Britiſh ſailor.

Lady Roſeberg, on the morning ſubſequent to Belmour's leaving her, had with peculiar care attended to every circumſtance, that could heighten the elegant negligence of her dreſs, had *ſuppoſed* a bad head ache, and ordered only ſuch and ſuch perſons to be admitted, among whom Belmour was *not* forgotten. She depended on his coming, and had arranged all ſhe was to ſay, and all ſhe was to *look*—the whole of which, ſummed-up, was to expreſs,

preſs, that ſhe *feared*, yet *wiſhed* he ſhould accept of lord Roſeberg's invitation.—No Belmour came—that day and the next paſſed without her knowing what could have become of him, and her mind already miſgave her; when ſhe accidentally heard from lord Sanſterre, whom ſhe met, that as he was returning from the club towards ſix in the morning, two days before, he had ſeen Belmour's chaiſe, with four poſt horſes, galloping out of town;—'what could 'poſſeſs the damn'd fellow?' he aſked, 'every body living is in town.'—Lady Roſeberg with difficulty concealed her emotion.—She was *not mortified*, ſhe too well knew the real cauſe of Belmour's leaving her, but ſhe was vexed and provoked at herſelf.—She *ought*, it now ſeemed to her, to have known Belmour

better.—'Yet who could ſuppoſe any 'man, who had ever lived in the world, 'ſo abſurd?'—What was to be done?—her whole plan had failed—to paſs the ſummer with lord Roſeberg, without one ſingle *intereſt*, was intolerable even to think of!—She pretended indiſpoſition; retired to her own apartment, where ſhe wrote above a dozen letters to Belmour, all which ſhe one after another threw into the fire; and at laſt determined to *poſtpone* this growing and already powerful inclination, and to encounter for the preſent the unſpeakable *ennui* of her huſband's conſtant company, as long as fate ſhould deſtine her to remain in the country; and rather take her chance of Belmour's returning to her of himſelf, whenever they ſhould meet, than riſk the opinion he might entertain

entertain of her, ſhould ſhe, circumſtanced as things were, unexpectedly write to him. A reſolution once taken, was ſupported by few better than lady Roſeberg; little alteration therefore was perceivable in her manner, during the few weeks, which they paſſed at their villa. Yet her mind was by no means equally compoſed.—The brilliant action, in which Belmour had been engaged, had not failed to fill every newſpaper, and for ſome time to become the general topic of diſcourſe.—She did not require to be *put in mind* of her lover—in fact, ſhe grew every day more anxious and uneaſy, and began to fear in earneſt ſhe had loſt her captive. She was agitated by a thouſand various ſenſations, which, if not new, were at leaſt ſtronger than any ſhe had hitherto

hitherto experienced. She looked forward with abſolute horrour to an autumn, paſſed at their chief country ſeat, ſurrounded by neighbours and relations, whither lord Roſeberg talked of ſhortly going; and to the ſtill more painful idea, which now often preſented itſelf, of finding Belmour engaged in ſome new purſuit, at her return to London.—But it ſo happened, that lord Roſeberg was ſuddenly ſeized with a cramp in the ſtomach, which exceſſively alarmed him, and he conſulted with lady Roſeberg, whether it would not be more prudent for him at once to remove to town, where he could be certain of every medical aſſiſtance at a moment's warning. Lady Roſeberg did not fail warmly to ſecond this propoſal, and accordingly, in a few days afterwards

they

they actually set out for town. As the coach-and-six drove along Piccadilly, almost the first object that presented itself was Belmour, walking slowly along the pavement.—They both saw him at the same instant, and lord Roseberg, pulling the check-string with vehemence, as soon as he could get the carriage stopped, threw himself half out of the window, extending both his arms, and screaming out in a shrill harsh voice, 'Come hither, my dear boy, this moment! we have been lost without you '—how could you go fighting there for 'nothing, when we have so many beggarly younger brothers, that might as 'well take the chance of being knocked 'o'the head, as not!—but come along, 'we have got you again now, and, by 'G—! we won't let you go a second 'time.'

'time.'—Saying this, he began making room in the carriage for him, and with a tone of impatience ordered the ſervant to open the door.—Belmour had advanced bowing, and, as it were purpoſely, not looking towards lady Roſeberg—when, in ſpeaking to lord Roſeberg, he raiſed his eyes, and immediately met her's, fixed on him with the ſofteſt expreſſion of tenderneſs and concern.—The dejected appearance of Belmour, the melancholy expreſſion of his countenance, really excited her pity, and ſhe had not time to compoſe her own looks, or to recover from the ſurpriſe of meeting him thus unexpectedly, after an abſence that had cauſed her ſo much pain.—Nor did ſhe wiſh it, but now no longer ſought to conceal the emotions, which his preſence excited.—Belmour

for

for ſome time remained with his eyes fixed on her's, not hearing a ſingle word that was ſaid to him, and found himſelf actually ſeated in the carriage with her, almoſt without knowing how he had gotten there. Lord Roſeberg ordered the carriage to proceed to his own houſe, and, of courſe, retained Belmour to dinner, and for the remainder of the day. Poor Belmour drank deeply of that dangerous poiſon, to which his artleſs mind expoſed him—he for the firſt time believed himſelf beloved, not only by the object of his paſſion, but by the object of his admiration and reſpect; for he never for an inſtant had doubted lady Roſeberg's virtues, which, though he might conſider them as a bar to his happineſs, he ſtill revered.

Day

Day after day now paſſed with him, in a ſtate of intoxicating joy.—Not a creature at firſt was in town, and conſtantly invited as the gueſt of lord Roſeberg, he paſſed almoſt his whole time in the ſociety, for which only he felt the leaſt real intereſt. An intimacy took place, which rendered him, he thought, ſupremely bleſſed: yet from a variety of cauſes his happineſs was by no means without alloy. The open, generous candour of his mind, often revolted at the means, which were taken to enſure the continuance of their commerce without ſuſpicion; though neceſſary, as lady Roſeberg aſſured him; and it required all the force of ſtrong paſſion, the dominion of which he was then under, to reconcile him in any degree to the conſtant ſcene of deceit and hypocriſy,

pocrify, to which he was hourly witneſs. The advantage alſo taken of the credulity of one, who certainly to him ſhewed every mark of attention and partial kindneſs, caſt a gloom over his thoughtful moments: but there was no alternative; he muſt ſubmit to what his honeſt heart could not approve, or for ever loſe the object moſt dear on earth to him. He moreover often looked forward to more laſting ties.—The age and infirmities of lord Roſeberg could not poſſibly fail to ſuggeſt the idea of lady Roſeberg's being one day free to diſpoſe of herſelf; and his weak and contemptible character, dwindling then into peeviſh and fretful childiſhneſs, the inſtant he was not indulged in whatever might be the fancy of the moment, made it impoſſible that

ſhe

ſhe could feel any laſting regret for his loſs.

Thus two years paſſed, during which time every art was diſplayed on her ſide, to retain her captive by the only means, on which ſhe could depend to ſecure his tenderneſs.—Had ſhe indeed been what ſhe ſeemed, no *art* was neceſſary: *his* paſſion was too ſincere not to be conſtant, while he could think himſelf not deceived in it's object.—This ſhe felt, and felt too her own ſituation—nay, ſometimes even almoſt wiſhed ſhe had not given Belmour an opinion of herſelf, which it coſt her ſo much pains to maintain; yet ſhe at other times enjoyed her triumph over his unſuſpecting heart, and applauded the ſubtlety of her own invention, by which

ſhe governed the minds either of thoſe who ſtood in her way, or of thoſe who contributed to her pleaſure—but the reign of deceit and falſehood is never laſting.

About this time Belmour, having one day as uſual paſſed the greateſt part of the morning at lady Roſeberg's, was ſtanding by the fire, liſtening to her arrangements for the evening, meaning ſoon after to take his leave.—When the door ſuddenly opened, and a man he had never ſeen hurried into the room without waiting to be announced, ran up to lady Roſeberg, and with an air of the greateſt familiarity, taking hold of both her hands, which he kiſſed one after the other, aſked her, If ſhe ever were 'ſo ſurprized' in her life, as at ſeeing

ſeeing him. 'My laſt letter did not 'announce this.'—She did indeed ſeem *ſurpriſed*, for ſhe turned as pale as aſhes the moment he entered the room.—'I have tired them out, and finiſhed 'the buſineſs,' ſaid he, 'and am, thank 'Heaven! returned to the only place on 'earth, after all, that one *can* live in.'—Then only perceiving Belmour for the firſt time, as it ſeemed, he eyed him from top to toe, with an inquiring, ſupercilious glance, not even bowing, and, ſtill holding lady Roſeberg's hands, led her, without the leaſt ceremony, to a window, where a long whiſper began between them, during which he ſometimes caſt his eyes towards Belmour, as if inquiring who he was.—Lady Roſeberg had already ſeveral times repeated the uſual ſign for Belmour to retire—

he was petrified—at laſt, however, though unwillingly he took his leave. —'Who can this be,' ſaid he to himſelf, as he walked ſlowly from the door, agitated by ſenſations he could not entirely define.—The perſon who had thus entered the room was a man rather genteel in his appearance, not young, but tall and well made; his features were marked, and not irregular; but his countenance was ſharp and ſarcaſtic.—He was dreſſed in a foreign ſurtout, and had the appearance of having lately come from abroad.

Belmour had not gone fifty paces from the door, when he met one of thoſe frequenters of every public place, and of every private ſociety, to which they can obtain admiſſion, who make

it their whole and ſole buſineſs, to dawdle from one place to another, retailers of every tittle tattle lie, and newſmongers ordinary and extraordinary—a Mr. Barnvelt by name, a diligent inveſtigator of all ſubjects that concerned others, and did *not* concern himſelf.—'So,' ſaid he, familiarly taking Belmour's arm and walking on with him, 'St. Fort is come back ſuddenly, 'when nobody expected him.—I think 'I ſaw him going into lady Roſeberg's 'not ten minutes ago—but *you* muſt 'know, for you are juſt come from 'thence, was it not he?'—'Who is St. 'Fort?' replied Belmour, without anſwering Barnvelt's queſtion.—'Damn 'it! *you* muſt know St. Fort—but no, 'no, now I think of it, when firſt you

'appeared in the world, he was already 'gone to Munich, having gotten him-'self appointed envoy, becauſe he had 'not a ſixpence in the world, and was 'over head and ears in debt.—*Who* he 'is I cannot eaſily tell you, I doubt whe-'ther he knows that himſelf, and I am 'ſure *I* do not—but *what* he is I *can* tell 'you, and that is, one of the damnedeſt 'ſly ſneering raſcals that ever exiſted— 'Egad! he made himſelf ſomehow or 'other uſeful to miniſtry, and was, as I 'ſaid, appointed envoy to Munich; and 'now, becauſe it ſuits him, I ſuppoſe, has 'made them recal him, for no creature 'expected him back—but you *muſt* 'have heard of him at leaſt,' continued he, looking Belmour full in the face.—'I never did.'—'Humph!'—here the converſation

converſation dropt; and Barnvelt, ſeeing that Belmour was not at all in a communicative mood, pretended that he ſaw ſome perſon on the other ſide of the ſtreet, to whom he muſt ſpeak, and hurried away.—Belmour was heartily glad to get rid of him; he wiſhed certainly for information concerning the perſon he had ſeen; but hated Barnvelt for every ſingle word he had uttered on the ſubject, which he thought might be all lies, or miſrepreſentations.—Yet what he had heard added conſiderably to a thouſand teaſing uneaſy ſenſations, which tormented him.—He now much quickened his pace, that he might not be ſtopped a ſecond time by ſome other impertinent fool, hurried home, went directly up to his own room, and ordered no one to be admitted to him.

Here he paced backwards and forwards, his mind wholly occupied by confuſed ideas and painful ſuſpicions, which he diſmiſſed as ſoon as they were formed—he looked to the hour of going to the opera, where he was to ſee lady Roſeberg, with an impatience ſcarcely ſupportable—yet a dinner in company was to be firſt endured.—His father (with whom he lived) had particularly deſired his attendance that day, and whatever might be the feelings of Belmour, he never, on any occaſion, ſacrificed to them a ſingle particle of duty or good nature.—At laſt the hour of the opera came.—When he arrived at the theatre, the firſt object that preſented itſelf to his ſight was lady Roſeberg, quietly and compoſedly ſeated in her box.—He looked at her for a few ſeconds

conds at a diſtance, before he went to her—ſhe was alone—on his entering the box, ſhe turned round with her back entirely to the ſtage, and making him a ſign to come and ſit in a chair cloſe by her, ſmiled with ſuch perfect eaſe and unconcern, that Belmour inſtantly felt aſhamed of all he had thought and all he had ſuffered, and was abſolutely in dread of her beginning on the ſubject of what had paſſed in the morning, which he had come with ſuch a determination to have explained—'By the 'by,' ſaid ſhe, 'you were in a pretty 'humour this morning, when you left 'me—I thought you meant to retain 'your poſt on the hearth by force of 'arms.'—Belmour muttered ſome incoherent ſentence, reddening and much embarraſſed. 'Well, well,' added ſhe,

'I have no time to ſcold you now, I 'have ſomething to ſay of real conſe- 'quence to us both, and, God knows! 'how ſoon we may be interrupted.— 'Beware of St. Fort, the perſon whom 'you ſaw this morning.'—'Beware!" ſaid Belmour, haſtily—'Do not inter- 'rupt me, I know that what you ſaw 'muſt appear ſtrange to you—the 'whole will be a long ſtory, I know not 'how it happened, that I never told you 'all this before, but it is to me a hate- 'ful ſubject—one thing I do *inſiſt* upon, 'if St. Fort ſhould come into the box, 'that you will be civil to him—'tis an 'age ago, when I was firſt married, and 'knew nothing almoſt of the world, 'that I found St. Fort the eſtabliſhed 'and intimate friend of my lord, who 'had known and protected him from a

'boy,

'boy, as I underſtood, and he never 'was out of the houſe—At firſt I really 'liked him, his talents and knowledge 'are ſuperior, and his converſation, '*when he chooſes it*, infinitely entertaining 'and inſtructive.'—She pauſed—Belmour was all attention—'In ſhort, he 'fell in love with me, or thought he 'did, which is the ſame thing—I then 'could not bear him, *as you may ſuppoſe* '—on this he grew ill-natured, jealous, 'and every thing that is odious—Had I 'at the firſt mentioned his ingratitude 'to my lord in attempting to ſeduce 'his wife, after all the obligations he 'owed him, St. Fort would have been 'forbidden the houſe, and I ſhould have 'had no further trouble about him; but 'he, taking advantage of my good-'nature, grew quite inſolent and over-

'bearing, and under the pretence of '*friendſhip*, and *care for my reputation*, 'he ſcarcely would allow me to ſpeak 'to a creature—However, as he was '*then welcome* to watch me as much as 'he pleaſed,' (ſaid ſhe with a ſigh) 'and 'as I had nothing *then* to conceal— 'I determined only to continue on my 'own way, and truſt to his being tired 'firſt, which ſo far happened, that, con- 'vinced I had no other attachment, he 'ſubmitted to be on terms of friendſhip 'only with me, and grew again tract- 'able and agreeable—In this ſtate of 'things he left England, ſome months 'before I for the firſt time ſaw you.— 'I dare ſay that now he does not really 'care a ſtraw for me, and if you have 'but common prudence'—here they were interrupted by the very perſon of whom

whom they were ſpeaking, and ſeveral other men, who at the ſame time came into the box.—Lady Roſeberg immediately introduced Belmour and St. Fort to each other, the latter made excuſes to Belmour for not knowing *who* he had the honour to meet in the morning.—Shortly after Belmour, as the box grew full, retired to another part of the houſe.—The perfect eaſe with which lady Roſeberg had talked of St. Fort, and the natural manner in which ſhe had accounted for his behaviour, without even attempting *an excuſe* for herſelf, relieved his mind at the moment from the ſuſpicions he had formed; yet he felt uneaſy at the thoughts of additional caution, which lady Roſeberg ſeemed to announce as neceſſary—already the moments appeared too ſhort to him, in which

which he was allowed to partake of her ſociety in any degree of liberty, and the idea of ſuch an *obſerver* as St. Fort was to him intolerable.—All this, however, he kept within his own breaſt; his firſt and conſtant rule was never to diſtreſs her, and while ſhe aſſured him of her tenderneſs, he was content to bear any thing.

Thus a few weeks paſſed, St. Fort was frequently at lord Roſeberg's, who, however, did not expreſs any very particular regard for him, or taſte for his converſation; which ſhewed indeed ſome genius, and, on many ſubjects, much information; but he was opinionated, haughty, and obſtinate, and, when he was not ſpeaking himſelf, unleſs where he wiſhed to pleaſe, his look was always

ways ſneering and contemptuous. Belmour and he, whenever a diſcuſſion aroſe, whatever the ſubject, ſeldom failed to ſupport a different opinion, and often with a conſiderable degree of warmth.—Belmour always argued from the heart, and St. Fort always from the head. There was nothing, indeed, in St. Fort's manner to lady Roſeberg, that abſolutely excited Belmour's jealouſy; but he diſliked her intimacy with ſuch a character, and though he avoided complaint, he grew thoughtful and melancholy—A new comer, too, whom he could not but deſpiſe too much ever to think of as a rival, was continually in his way—a Sir Harry Wilburne—one of thoſe freſh-looking half-formed animals, who paſs for handſome till they are five-and-twenty, and then become overgrown,

overgrown, fat, unwieldy monſters. This Sir Harry Wilburne had juſt emerged from his country ſeat, in the vicinity of a provincial town, where he had ſhone the brighteſt ſtar, and left all the miſſes inconſolable for his loſs. On the acquiſition of a baronetage, and a very conſiderable eſtate, he had come up to London, and, with little introduction, was in an inſtant generally received into what is called the beſt company—ſought after, and invited to every party.—He was ignorant of the commoneſt rules of good-breeding, forward and familiar—but he played at all games—cared not what he loſt—put down his money to every ſubſcription—made love to every woman—employed the moſt expenſive coach-maker—dreſſed in the very exceſs of the faſhion, and imitated

imitated, as far as his very contemptible genius would allow, the moſt refined coxcombs and ſpendthrifts of the day.—Such was Sir Harry Wilburne—yet even lady Roſeberg would allow him to ſit by her at public places, whiſper in her ear, hang familiarly over her, and often, when poor Belmour ſtood reſpectfully waiting to lead her away, he would ſeize her too willing hand, and bruſh by with the moſt provoking eaſe and ſelf-ſatisfaction. When at any time Belmour ventured to touch on ſubjects of this ſort, which he never did but in the gentleſt terms, rather of entreaty than reproach, he was always told, that ſhe *muſt* ſpeak to other men, if ſhe ſpoke to him; that ſhe had rather appear *particular* in public with any man, that was really indifferent to her, than

than risk the chance of exposing herself to what *he knew* would make her wretched—The world, she said, was not to be despised; but that was not all, for if ever lord Roseberg grew for an instant to think he had cause for suspicions, he would immediately forbid Belmour the house—All this was seasoned with every expression, that the most refined and captivating art could suggest.

It happened one morning, that Belmour had, with more than usual earnestness, pressed lady Roseberg to meet him at a masquerade, which was given that night at the Pantheon, and was likely to be very numerous.—Lord Roseberg had the gout, and sat at home, which she pleaded as an excuse, saying, that he had

had 'been peeviſh of late,' and complained that ſhe 'neglected his ſociety, 'and could never ſtay at home unleſs 'the room was full of company;'—that ſhe had, therefore, determined to dedicate that evening entirely to ſitting with him, and even particularly requeſted of Belmour *not* to come. To this he reluctantly conſented.

At night Belmour, not finding his carriage at the door of the place where he had ſupped, had walked away, and in paſſing by one of the ſhops where there was a diſplay of maſquerade dreſſes, it ſtruck him, that he might as well look in at the Pantheon for an hour--He entered the ſhop, and in an inſtant a variety of dreſſes were produced—That of a black-friar ſtruck him as

as well calculated for diſguiſe, which ſuited his diſpoſition at the moment, from expoſing him leſs to the plague of impertinent interruptions. He had walked about the rooms for ſome time, when, ſitting down on one of the long ſofas placed behind the columns which ſupported the gallery, he found himſelf near two perſons, who were in very cloſe converſation. The man he thought looked like Sir Harry Wilburne, but the woman (on the ſide neareſt to him) was ſo completely diſguiſed, that he could not even gueſs at her, and his curioſity indeed was then very little excited. Shortly afterwards he ſaw St. Fort come, and ſtand oppoſite to the two perſons who were in converſation—He could not miſtake him, as he was merely in a domino, with no attempt

at

at diſguiſe—Preſently the perſon whom he took for Wilburne got up, and St. Fort took his place by the lady—he ſeemed extremely agitated, and ſpoke with great vehemence—Belmour then diſtinctly heard theſe words, 'God 'd—mn you! if you ſpeak a ſingle 'word more to that puppy, by God! 'I will expoſe you to the whole room '—the world ſhall know, as well as *I* do, '*what* you are.'—Belmour ſtartled, and concluding St. Fort muſt be in liquor, was preparing, like a true knight errant, as he ever was in the cauſe of the oppreſſed, to defend the lady, though completely, as he believed, unknown to him.—A maſk at the moment had ſo faſt hold of him by the ſleeve, that for a few ſeconds he could not diſengage himſelf, and in the interim

rim he ſaw the lady take St. Fort by the arm and, abſolutely clinging to him, lead him away towards another part of the room, whiſpering in his ear with the greateſt expreſſions of familiarity and earneſtneſs poſſible.—Belmour was infinitely ſurpriſed, that *any* woman ſhould thus ſubmit to ſuch an affront; and, his curioſity being now excited, he followed them—For ſome time the crowd, which was immenſe, prevented his approaching—he at laſt ſaw them again ſeated together, and, as it ſeemed, their difference ſettled—then again they got up, and Belmour ſoon after found himſelf cloſe to the lady, and preſſed on every ſide by a crowd of maſks, he then overheard her ſay to St. Fort—let ‘ me go home, I intreat you: would to ‘ Heaven, I had not come with you! I

‘ am

'am frightened to death, and feel that 'I ſhall be diſcovered.'—Though ſhe ſpoke in a feigned voice, ſomewhat of a well known tone made him ſhudder —He liſtened—again ſhe ſpoke—the ſame tone—ſtill it could *not* be—the agony of doubt was too great to bear, and at all hazards he reſolved to know the truth—He followed them cloſely, juſt ſo far off as not, as he imagined, to be obſerved by them—They went towards the door—arrived there, a hackney-chair was called, and St. Fort, in an audible voice, directed the chairmen to carry the lady to the Adelphi. On this Belmour for an inſtant revived —he was however too deeply intereſted, thus lightly to believe—inſtantly ſlipped off his friar's habit and cowl, and followed the chair—The night was uncommonly

commonly dark and foggy—almoſt breathleſs he kept up with the chair, directed by the lantern, which one of the chairmen held.—They proceeded —already they had gotten nearly as far as Charing Croſs—Belmour was beginning to accuſe himſelf of folly and unjuſt ſuſpicion—when the chair was ſet down—what the perſon within ſaid he heard not, but the chairmen, after ſeveral hearty oaths for having been brought ſo far out of the way, as they ſaid for nothing, took up the chair again, and turning ſhortly round, haſtened along Pall-Mall, and up St. James's Street —Belmour's heart now ſunk, and his limbs with difficulty ſupported him—Cloſely however ſtill he followed, till the chair was ſet down in Park Street, at the door of lady Roſeberg—He leaned againſt

againſt the rails.—A ſervant, who had of courſe ſtood ready, inſtantly at their approach opened the door, and, recommending to the chairmen to make no noiſe again when the chair retired, the door was cloſed.—Belmour for ſome time remained motionleſs, his head reſting between his hands, ſtunned and oppreſſed with the painful ſenſations, which crowded on his imagination.

The fog was now diſperſed, and day began to appear—the morning was cold, and a drizzling rain fell faſt.—Belmour was without his hat, wholly inſenſible of his ſituation, or whither he was going.—He walked on for ſome time with haſty ſteps, when finding himſelf ſuddenly encloſed, and hurried along by an impetuous crowd of people, he was

recalled to himſelf in Oxford road, where the firſt object that met his eyes was the horrid figure of a criminal going to execution.—'Ah, miſerable wretch!' ſaid he to himſelf, 'how wouldſt thou 'wiſh to change ſituations with me! yet is 'that wiſh almoſt mutual!—*thy* pains will 'ſhortly end!'—He inſtantly turned from the dreadful ſpectacle, and getting out of the crowd as faſt as he could, made the beſt of his way home to his father's houſe, in Groſvenor Square.—His own valet-de-chambre was at the door, a Swiſs, who had ſerved him for many years with uncommon fidelity and attachment: he was anxiouſly waiting for his maſter, and on ſeeing the diſordered ſtate of his appearance, the poor fellow was ſtill more alarmed. '*Oh! mon* '*Dieu! mon cher maître, qu' eſt-il donc* '*arrivé?*

'*arrivé?—un duel?—Mais non, vous* '*ferier plus tranquille—je me rappelle* '*quand.*'—'*Ne parle pas ſi haut,*' ſaid Belmour, as he lightly ſtepped up ſtairs, '*ce n'eſt rien—va te coucher, Bertram,* '*et laiſſe moi.*'—But Bertram followed him into his room—'*Laiſſe moi,*' he again repeated; and flinging himſelf as he was, on his bed, he made a ſign, that he would be left alone.—In vain did he try to find the repoſe he ſo much wanted—a ſhort interrupted ſleep for a time, indeed, cloſed his eye-lids; but his imagination, wandering, led him o'er unknown regions and agitated ſeas, involved in inextricable mazes of endleſs ſufferings.—He awoke unrefreſhed, but endeavoured to collect his ſcattered thoughts—to be at leaſt compoſed—'twas all he had left to him!—the viſions

of future happineſs were no more.—As he was walking with agitated ſteps about his room, a note was brought to him from lady Roſeberg, requeſting that he would come to her.—'Yes I 'will go,' ſaid he, 'tis a laſt farewell.' Then calling in the ſervant, he ſent word, that he ſhould attend her.—It was yet too early—he was impatient for the time—he had no *ſpeech* to frame—no *anger* to conquer—no *reſolution* to form—the veil was torn from before his eyes; and the deluſion had ceaſed for ever.

Lady Roſeberg, notwithſtanding his diſguiſe, had recognized him at the maſquerade; and at the moment ſhe had ſpoken to St. Fort with ſo much earneſtneſs, to beg he would allow her to return home,

home, had perceived Belmour close to her.—Whether or not *he* had heard what she said, she was not certain, or how far she was discovered—However, taking her part like a true woman of the world, she determined immediately to send for Belmour, make the best she could of what had passed, and trust to his honour for the future.—When Belmour entered the room, the steady and determined look of grief painted on his countenance, his hair disordered, and his fine manly form shaken with agony of mind, struck and affected her more than she expected—she felt a keeness of regret and shame for which she was not prepared. Belmour stood in silence before her—a flood of tears came to her relief, the usual resource!—she could speak only in broken incoherent sen-

tences—At laſt, making an effort, ſhe was attempting to *juſtify* her conduct, to plead her youth and inexperience, when firſt ſhe found herſelf expoſed to the dark deſigning arts of St. Fort, to whom ſhe was *forced* to *allow* ſhe long ago had fallen a prey.—Sir Harry Wilburne, ſhe begged him to believe..... Here Belmour interrupted her.—'It 'is immaterial,' ſaid he, 'further to 'dwell on painful and degrading ſub-'jects—you have deceived me, cruelly 'deceived me! ſince others beſide my-'ſelf have been fortunate, or *miſerable* 'enough to pleaſe you.—Whether it be 'St. Fort, or ſir Harry Wilburne, or 'any others, is to *me* indifferent—I 'come to take a laſt farewell, and to 'aſſure you, lady Roſeberg, that with '*me*, not only your reputation is ſafe, 'but

'but that I would defend you, guard you, 'even at the hazard of my life.'—He paused, unable to proceed—the steps of some one in the anti-room were at this moment heard.—Belmour seized her hand, which he eagerly kissed, and hastily retired, unseen, by the opposite door. He went the next morning to his father, told him that, with his leave, he should immediately go for some months abroad; that he entreated of him not to inquire into the cause of this hasty departure, as he did not feel himself at liberty to speak to him with that openness, that on all occasions he wished.—Lord Delavere was a man of the world; he easily guessed the cause, or near it, of his son's intended departure; and as, in all respects, this happened perfectly to suit his own views

and intentions for him, he readily conſented—He was informed by others of Belmour's attachment to lady Roſeberg, and likewiſe of her character; and though, in a worldly way, he did not at all diſapprove of a connection of that ſort, which he thought might contribute to form his ſon, and keep him out of worſe company; yet, as ſhe was juſtly ſuppoſed to be extremely ſeducing, and to poſſeſs in no common degree the arts of captivation, he was not at all ſorry to find, from whatever reaſon it might proceed, that Belmour ſhould have broken chains, which began to give him ſome uneaſineſs from their duration, and from the fear of ſuch an attachment interfering with the favourite plan of his life, the marriage of his ſon with lady Clementina Alton, his beloved niece,

niece, who from an infant had been left under his protection, and who in fact he considered as a favourite child. He had placed her, together with his daughter, under the care of his sister, lady Eliza, when they were children, and had always had the same fatherly attentions for the one, as for the other. Lady Clementina was then extremely young, and lord Delavere thought, that at Belmour's return she would be more formed, and more likely to please him —he therefore, without any injunctions as to time, allowed Belmour to depart, depending on his own wish for his return. Belmour however a little outstaid his father's expectations, in not coming back to England till nearly two years were elapsed from the time of his departure.

To a mind like Belmour's, a ſecond viſit to Italy was likely to be yet more entertaining, than a firſt had been—to that enchanting country, therefore, he immediately determined to repair, and there to ſeek, from change of ſcene, and variety of objects, that tranquillity of mind, of which he was unfairly robbed. Stopping at Paris only a ſufficient time to procure a paſſport, he hurried over the unintereſting road, which leads from that capital by Champagne to Lyons. The romantic beauties of Savoy firſt rouzed his attention, and, while loſt in admiration of the grand features of nature, he for a time forgot his griefs, and fell into a compoſed and penſive melancholy. The remains of Grecian and Roman art, ſo profuſedly ſcattered over Italy, in which the refined taſte of Bel-

mour

mour took peculiar delight; muſic, of which he was paſſionately fond; and literary ſcience, in which he found conſtant opportunities to indulge, contributed to ſooth and occupy his mind; and his perfect acquaintance with the Italian language gave him every advantage, in the purſuits which he followed. Yet ſtill the early leſſon of deceit and falſehood, which he had received, weighed heavily on his heart, and he felt the abſolute want of that intereſt in life, which he no longer hoped to find. At his return to England, he found that lady Roſeberg had much loſt herſelf in the opinion of the world; her conduct had been leſs circumſpect, and her manner and appearance, though ſhe preſerved her beauty, were conſiderably changed for the worſe—But as ſhe reſted on thoſe

ſteady props to a tottering reputation, an enduring huſband and a large fortune, ſhe was ſtill received in moſt ſocieties, and courted by many individuals, who found their account in the ſort of protection it was yet in her power to afford. Belmour was much affected the firſt time he ſaw her after his return to England; and on all occaſions, where he could do ſo without the appearance of particularity, ſedulouſly avoided her. He felt this ſtill an effort, and therefore was rejoiced when his father, ſoon after his arrival in London, ſignified his intention of going for the ſummer to Belmour Caſtle—Thither he inſtantly offered to accompany him. This propoſition, as it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, was gladly received by the earl, who had previouſly ſettled with lady

lady Eliza, that the moment his niece could be perſuaded to leave town, ſhe was to bring her to him.—Thus all his fond expectations ſeemed to be realizing; for, accuſtomed only to proſperity, he looked not, where there was a poſſibility of ſucceſs, for the failure of a favourite plan; nor did he eaſily liſten to any thing like contradiction, or oppoſition to determinations he had once made. Lord Delavere having been born to an immenſe eſtate, and much patronage, all which fell into his hands early in life, by the death of his parents, was taught by thoſe who ſurrounded him, that he was *always in the right*; this he ſo firmly believed, that he became the more determined and the more obſtinate in the proſecution

ſecution of all his plans, from a ſpirit of rectitude; as thoſe always are led fartheſt aſtray, whoſe errors originate from honeſt principles.

CHAP. V.

We left Belmour in contemplation of the ſetting ſun on a calm ſea.—Night was now coming on faſt—he had been for a conſiderable time ſitting on a fragment of rock, his eyes fixed on the ocean, but loſt in thought, and quite unmindful of approaching darkneſs, when his dog ſuddenly called forth his attention by ſpringing up into his arms. The poor little animal, after hunting for ſome time in the wood cloſe by, had, unheeded by Belmour, creeped gently along, trembling and hanging it's tail, till it found itſelf under the protection of it's maſter; when barking outrageouſly, and looking towards the wood

wood behind, it obliged Belmour to turn, and among the trees he indiſtinctly ſaw the figure of a man, who, as he thought, was endeavouring to hide himſelf.—Belmour inſtantly ſprang forward, and ſeized the man by the collar, concluding him to be ſome poacher, or ill deſigning perſon.—The man, dreadfully alarmed, hollowed loudly, intreating to have his life ſpared—'I am a 'poor man—for God ſake! let me go '—you can get nothing from me.'—'Fool!'—ſaid Belmour, letting go his hold, 'doſt thou take me for a robber? 'But what art *thou?*' continued he, 'what is thy buſineſs here, out of every 'road or path?'—The man, recovering from his fright, anſwered rather ſulkily, 'Why, I'm doing no harm, I loſt my 'way, and I need not be put in fear of

'my life for that!'—Belmour regretted inſtantly the alarm he had occaſioned the poor man, and in the gentleſt tone aſked him whence he came, and if he could aſſiſt him? 'Came,' ſaid he, 'why I came along with my cattle, 'left them in yonder field there, for 'the night, and was going on to doctor, 'what d'ye call him, at the parſonage.' —'Have you buſineſs with Mr. Rey- 'cott, the rector?'—'And what matters 'all that, I don't ſuppoſe you'll ſhow 'me the way!'—'Indeed but I will,' replied Belmour; 'if you will follow 'me, I will direct you to the parſonage '—but it is ſome way, and you ſeem 'very lame—here, friend, lean on my 'arm, and I will conduct you.' 'That's 'main good of you, ſir,' replied the man, ſtruck with an offer he ſo little expected.

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The moon, which had juſt then riſen, allowed him to diſtinguiſh the figure of his conductor, which much increaſed his confidence, and he felt remorſe for the ſurly manner, in which he had at firſt ſpoken. Wiſhing to repair his fault, he of himſelf continued, 'my buſineſs 'is not with the doctor, but I ha' got 'ſome letters for the young lady *as* is 'with him.'—'For Miſs Melville?' interrupted Belmour haſtily.—'From 'whom?'—'But what right have I,' ſaid he to himſelf, 'to pry into the ſe-'crets of others?—no matter, no mat-'ter,' ſaid he, again turning to the man. —The man continued, 'nay, an' pleaſe 'your honour, I don't know *who* it was 'as *give* me the letters, it was a young 'gentleman I never *ſeed* before—at 'the ſquire's there, down in Cornwall. '—I often

'—I often carries letters and parcels 'for the ſquire, and for other folks in 'my way, as I *comes* along with my 'cattle; there was another gentleman 'by, too, and they bid me be ſure 'and deliver the letters ſafe—that's all 'I knows o' the matter—oh dear! 'dear! I don't know how I ſhall get 'along!—I almoſt broke my leg 'againſt yonder piece of ſtone there.'—After proceeding ſome little way, the man appeared to be in ſo much pain, that it ſeemed impoſſible to get him on any further, when, finding that they were oppoſite to a cottage, Belmour propoſed to him to remain there for the night, if he could be lodged, and to give him the letters, which he ſaid he could deliver, as in his way home he muſt paſs almoſt cloſe by the parſonage.—To this propoſition

propoſition the man readily agreed, and a night's lodging was procured. Belmour put a guinea into the man's hand, telling him that he would ſend the apothecary to him, and then taking the letters in his hand, lightly ſtepped away.

Belmour, from the moment he had received the packet for Miſs Melville, had felt an indefinable ſenſe of pleaſure —He would have done juſt what he had done for any other perſon. No ſcruple therefore occurred to him as to the charge he had undertaken ; but as he came to the village, the church-clock ſtruck eleven ; this firſt informed him of the lateneſs of the hour, which had wholly eſcaped his notice, and made him heſitate whether or not he ſhould attempt

attempt delivering the letters that night, as it was more than probable, that the family at the parſonage would be retired to bed—Still he walked on with quickened ſteps, and found himſelf cloſe to the houſe, before he had made his determination.—Seeing a light in one of the windows, and the caſement open, he ventured to knock—no one anſwered—he gently repeated the ſtroke—ſtill all was ſilent, and he was juſt leaving the door, ſomewhat unwillingly, with an intention of returning to execute his commiſſion in the morning, when Miſs Melville appeared at the open window, and inquired who was there.—She half retired back, on ſeeing lord Belmour, with an expreſſion of much ſurprize; but as he immediately bowed, by which ſhe found that ſhe had been

ſeen,

ſeen, ſhe again advanced, and leaned out of the window. The moon now ſhone brightly, and it's ſoft rays fell directly on the beautiful face of Miſs Melville—her fine flowing hair hung in profuſion over her ſhoulders.—She had on a light ſort of wrapping gown, and her airy form ſeemed to acquire new grace from the negligence of her attire.—Belmour was loſt in admiration—he held the letters in his hand, without ſpeaking for a while, wholly forgetful of his errand, till recalled from this ſtate of enchantment by the ſharp voice of the rector, who had, unperceived, opened a ſmall caſement, through which he had thruſt his head. Belmour, not without much heſitation and embarraſſment, endeavoured to explain the reaſon of his coming at that hour, and made many excuſes

excuſes for the diſturbance he had cauſed.

The rector, who had been ſome time in bed, had been faſt aſleep, and would have remained ſo in ſpite of the knocking at his door, had not his wife, with no ſmall difficulty, awakened him, terrified at the noiſe ſhe ſo unexpectedly heard. He at laſt got out of bed, his temper much ruffled at being diſturbed, as he thought unneceſſarily, from ſome imaginary fancy of his wife's, convinced no one had knocked at the door; and preparing again to repeat the uſual epithets he ſo liberally on all occaſions beſtowed on her, of fool and ideot—when on going to the window, by the light of the moon, he perceived lord Belmour at the door. His ſenſations became

became very different, though not leſs troubleſome to himſelf—his extreme haſte to go down and open the door, was counteracted by the unlucky accident of a very *neceſſary* part of his dreſs being no where at the moment to be found.—In vain did he toſs and tumble every thing in the room over and over, ſwear the devil had been there, and abuſe his wife;—'twas all in vain—*they* had ſlipt behind the high-backed arm-chair, that ſtood by the bed-ſide, and lay completely concealed.—No friendly ray of moonſhine then lent it's aſſiſtance to the diſcovery.—In this dilemma, with loud vociferation, he entreated of Miſs Melville to go to the door, and beg 'my lord to ſit 'down in the parlour,' till he could wait upon him himſelf.—She obeyed,

and,

and, taking her candle in her hand, deſcended, and opened the door, but appeared ſomewhat embarraſſed as ſhe ſpoke, and her embarraſſment was not diminiſhed, on perceiving how much Belmour partook of the ſame ſenſation.—A ſituation, ſo little expected, had thrown him off his guard, and the impreſſion Miſs Melville had from the firſt made on him, heightened at the moment by a thouſand circumſtances, was too evident in his looks and manner to be miſtaken. They proceeded together into the little parlour.—Lord Belmour gave Miſs Melville the letters, entreating her to read them. He ſhould, he ſaid, juſt ſtay to ſee the rector, who indeed was calling from above every two or three minutes, to ſay that he was '*coming*.'—She took

the letters, looked at the ſuperſcription only, ſaying, ſhe knew 'whence 'they came,' and laid them down on the 'table—a ſilence followed.—Miſs Melville, at laſt, recovering herſelf, as well as ſhe could, begged ſome explanation, relative to the circumſtances of lord Belmour's having been the meſſenger, who brought the letters. He briefly told her what had happened, and again they were ſilent.—Belmour could think of little elſe but the object before him, and his reſpect prevented his uttering even a word expreſſive of the admiration, with which he was inſpired.—A ſhort time now paſſed, with only an unmeaning queſtion, or remark, on one ſide or the other, when Miſs Melville was really relieved by the rector's calling out, in a triumphant tone,

tone, 'now *I am* coming.'—'Seek and 'ye ſhall find,' ſaid he, with emphaſis, as he went down ſtairs, and preſently he appeared. The comical ſmirk of his countenance, his buſtle and delight, void of the ſlighteſt ſenſe of uneaſineſs at the ludicrous figure he made, with his clothes half on, and his wig half off, extracted an involuntary ſmile from them both.—Light he had none, but that of the moon; nor was there indeed ever a ſingle candle burning in the houſe after ten o'clock, except in Miſs Melville's room, and that was a 'uſeleſs expenſe,' he had often remarked to his wife, with ſome acrimony, but of which, at this moment, he felt the advantage. After a few moments, Belmour took his leave.—He had not gone many paces from the door, when

he ſaw one of his father's grooms coming towards him; but the moment the man perceived him, he turned ſhort round, and ran back towards the caſtle.—To this Belmour paid little attention; but a ſecond and a third ſervant doing exactly the ſame thing, he wondered what could be the matter. After entering the gates, he perceived the ſervants were in a ſort of a buſtle, and when he came into the ſupper-room, a general look of inquiry prevailed. The ſupper had been over ſome time, as half paſt ten was the regular hour;—the company were, however, moſt of them ſtill ſitting round the table. His father was reading at the other end of the room, and, juſt looking off his book for the time he ſpoke, aſked

him

him dryly, if he had ſupt where he had been, or choſe to have any ſupper brought.

Belmour now began to tell his ſtory, but perceived ſuch an air of diſbelief in every countenance, that he made it very ſhort. Melford, who was walking about the room, came up to him, and with an air of importance ſaid, in a half whiſper, 'ſhe is a damn'd fine woman, 'by God!'—'Of whom are you talk-'ing, ſir?' ſaid Belmour, to him, in the very graveſt tone poſſible.—'Pho! 'pho!' ſaid Melford, ſtepping away with an affected air of indifference, but taking care not to addreſs another word to Belmour for the reſt of the evening. Heartley, looking down, twirled his knife and fork round on his

plate; and lady Clementina, the moſt unconcerned of the company, hummed the beginning of half a dozen different opera airs, vowed it was the fineſt night ſhe ever ſaw, and that ſhe wiſhed any body would walk with her.—'I 'have been taking your part,' ſaid ſhe, laughing, 'and telling my uncle it was 'not fair to ſend after you, as he did, ſo 'don't look ſo glum at me, dear Bel-'mour.'—Belmour, teazed and provoked at all this, ſaid dryly, that he could 'not conceive there ſhould be any thing 'extraordinary in walking out late in 'ſuch a night,' that they knew he frequently ate no ſupper—'beſides,'—'nay, now, you ſhall not tell your ſtory 'over again,' ſaid lady Clementina, holding her hand before his mouth, 'for then I *cannot* take your part.—

'Why

'Why ſhould you be aſhamed of where 'you have been? I am ſure I only 'wiſh *I* had been with you, for'—'Lady 'Clementina, lady Clementina,' interrupted lady Eliza, 'you *muſt not* talk 'ſo—fie, fie, child, you never conſider 'what you ſay.—Come, brother, do let 'us all go to bed, I am ſure it is time.' Saying this, ſhe got up, candles were brought, and the company retired for the night.

CHAP. VI.

BELMOUR felt ſeriouſly diſturbed at the manner, in which his accidental viſit to Miſs Melville had been taken. His father, he perceived, thought more of it, than he choſe to expreſs, from his wholly avoiding the ſubject; and the reſt of the company, according to their different diſpoſitions, all took it up in a way, that was extremely diſpleaſing to him.—What ſtill more alarmed him, was the growing intereſt he felt in his own heart, for a perſon of whom he knew nothing, one too much involved in a cloud of myſtery, which, without avowing pretenſions neither prudence nor honour could juſtify, it was extremely

difficult to attempt penetrating.—His father's decided objection to any perſon of inferiour birth, to ſay nothing of the anxious deſire, to which Belmour was no ſtranger, of his union with lady Clementina, made him dread the idea of an attachment, which might deſtroy all the flattering hopes of an indulgent parent, or his own peace of mind for ever. He had ſuffered too much already from paſſion, not to dread its effects—he wiſhed therefore to curb the ſenſations of pleaſure and admiration, which he had experienced on this occaſion, before they gained further power, and determined to avoid any attention towards Miſs Melville that might appear particular, and take his chance of future events for their further acquaintance.

Lord Delavere continued his silence, never once touching on the subject of the visit to Belmour; but after that occurrence, appeared more serious and reserved in his manner to him than usual. Belmour, though he had longed to go the next morning to the parsonage, and would, in another case, have thought it but a common attention, in consequence of the sort of disturbance he had occasioned on the preceding night, had had sufficient command over himself not to go, and it was now nearly a fortnight since he had seen Miss Melville, or heard a single word from the rectory, when he happened one evening to go out alone on horseback.—Lady Clementina, as usual, was wanting to make *a party* to go *somewhere*, no matter to her where,

and

and had that evening been able to collect only Heartley and lady Caroline.—The weather was uncommonly fine, and ſhe declared, that ſhe would take a long walk out of the park, and frighten her uncle, and her aunt Eliza, by coming home late, and 'making them think 'ſhe had *run away*.'—With this determination ſhe ſet out, accompanied by the perſons above-mentioned.—They were ſcarcely out of the park-gate, when they perceived Miſs Melville, taking her evening walk alone. Lady Clementina flew up to her, ſeized her arm, and proteſted (in ſpite of a wink and a grave look from lady Caroline) that ſhe ſhould not only walk with them wherever they went; 'which way 'that was to be, ſhe had not', ſhe ſaid, 'determined; but come back with

'them, and pafs the evening at the 'caftle.'—She would take no refufal; and lady Caroline, feeing that it muft be fo, out of civility joined her entreaties to her coufin's. Mifs Melville, thus taken unawares, and having, in fact, no fingle excufe to offer, did not long oppofe their requeft. They had continued their walk for nearly a mile, along a narrow by-lane, leading to a fmall village, when, at a turn, they perceived Belmour at no great diftance before them, on horfeback; he was alone, unattended even by a groom—his arms were croffed over his breaft, and the bridle thrown on the horfe's neck; the animal moved flowly on, juft putting one foot before the other, with it's head carried horizontally before it.—Lady Clementina, looking round to her companions,

panions, put her finger to her mouth, in token of ſilence, and advanced gently till ſhe came, unperceived, almoſt cloſe to Belmour; then ſlyly drawing out her handkerchief, ſhe threw it at the horſe. The animal thus ſuddenly ſtruck, made a violent ſtart, then plunged, then reared, and muſt inevitably have flung any leſs active, or leſs expert rider than Belmour.—Lady Caroline ſcreamed, and almoſt fainted. Lady Clementina put both her hands before her face, and held them cloſe. Miſs Melville advanced a few paces, her face paler than aſhes; and Heartley ſtood ſtill, ſeeing clearly, that no aſſiſtance could be afforded.—Belmour firſt allowed the horſe, inſtigated by fear, to make it's various efforts, then checked and brought it back, and gently

gently patting it's beautiful ſhining neck, alighted with the moſt perfect compoſure, and ſmiling at the alarm into which the ladies had been thrown, he thanked them for the concern they expreſſed, for what he termed his 'imaginary danger.'—'Well,' ſaid lady Clementina, 'ſince you are ſafe, and 'aunt Eliza is not here to ſcold me, 'I don't care, and ſo come along with 'us, couſin.'—Belmour obeyed, and accompanied them, leading his horſe after him. As they paſſed a few ſtraggling cottages, lady Clementina ſaw in the window of a little ſhop, a ribbon ſhe declared to be '*beautiful*'—In they went.—*She* had no purſe—Belmour immediately produced his, which ſeemed heavy, and ſome ſilver at the ſame time, which latter more than anſwered

the

the demand. They came ſoon after to a ſmall cottage, before the door of which were a few trees, with a ruſtic bench on one ſide, and on the other a quantity of fine roſe-buſhes, growing luxuriantly, half hanging from the cottage-wall, againſt which they had once been nailed.—The ſhade and fragrance of the ſpot tempted them to ſit and reſt themſelves; and it was already growing dark, without their having perceived, that the ſun had finiſhed it's courſe. As the converſation had taken a more ſerious turn than uſual, and Miſs Melville had a principal part in it, Belmour was all attention; when in the midſt of their diſcourſe, a poor little ragged dirty child, who had for ſome time, unperceived, ſtood in the doorway of the cottage, ſet up a ſudden cry,

cry, bellowing, 'the horſe! the horſe!' The mother of the child, alarmed, ran in haſte from within, to ſee what was the matter—then, with the bittereſt exclamation, repeated, 'Oh! 'dear! dear! the horſe! the naſty 'horſe! he has torn, and trampled 'down all my *bit* of potatoes. Oh 'Lord! what will Thomas ſay, when 'he comes home?—Oh dear! dear!' then, happening to turn, and perceiving the company that were near, the poor woman checked her guſhing tears, ready to fall from her full eyes, and ſupplicating for pardon, hoped ſhe had 'ſaid no harm.—I did not ſee who 'was here, indeed; indeed, I did 'not—pray, your honour, excuſe 'me!'—'Good Heavens!' ſaid Belmour, ſnatching away the horſe, and turning

turning it looſe, 'am *I* the cauſe of 'ſo much pain!'—the ncatching up the dirty little urchin in his arms, he preſſed it cloſely to his boſom, and followed the woman, who had retired into the houſe.—He preſently returned, ſtill holding the child in his arms, and endeavouring to ſooth and comfort it.—The woman again appeared at the door, her eyes ſtreaming with tears, but with tears of a far different expreſſion—ſurpriſe and gratitude were too ſtrongly marked on her countenance, to be miſtaken.—Belmour, with a look that impoſed ſilence, put the child carefully into her arms—then turning to the company, aſked them if they would not 'begin their walk homeward, as it was 'growing late.'—They aroſe from their ſeat, and lady Caroline, complaining of

of fatigue, leaned on Heartley's arm.—Lady Clementina, running up to them, ſeized his other arm, ſaying, ſhe 'would *help them on*, and now,' turning to Miſs Melville, 'I leave *you* 'Belmour, and his horſe, all to your-'ſelf, to make the moſt you can of.'—Belmour, having conſigned his horſe, which Heartley had already caught, to the care of the woman of the cottage, till he ſhould ſend his groom for it, ſaid, that *the horſe* at leaſt ſhould not be troubleſome, and that he ſhould be happy in offering his ſervices to conduct Miſs Melville.—As ſhe took his arm, ſhe felt him tremble.—The road was in many places rough, and the evening ſo far advanced, that they could ſcarcely diſcern their way—often did Belmour, as he thought, merely to

ſave

ſave her from the danger of falling, preſs her arm cloſer to his beating heart, but with an expreſſion ſo authorized by reſpect, that it could not offend.—They followed their companions, who walked ſlowly, on account of lady Caroline, ſcarcely ſpeaking during the whole of the way.—Their thoughts were too much occupied by the ſingularity of finding themſelves in a ſituation they a few hours before had ſo little expected, either to admit of indifferent ſubjects, or of indulging in more intereſting converſation.

When they arrived at the caſtle, contrary to lady Clementina's expectation, ſhe found her aunt, lady Eliza, perfectly at eaſe on her account, from knowing her with lady Caroline and Heartley,

Heartley, on whoſe conduct and protection ſhe could depend; and from being herſelf deeply engaged at the moment in a pool at commerce, ſome of the neighbours having come on a viſit to the caſtle, and remained there for the evening, which, with the addition of Saunter, and her dear lord Fenmoſs, had enabled her, much to her ſatisfaction, to make up a party. Determined one way or another to torment her aunt, lady Clementina inſiſted on *buying in*, to win the pool from her, as ſhe ſaid, becauſe ſhe ſaw, ſhe thought herſelf '*ſure*.'—'Belmour,' ſaid ſhe, leaning back, and holding out her hand, 'give me 'your purſe again, for you know 'I have none of my own.'—Belmour immediately put his hand into his pocket,

pocket, then recollecting himſelf, ſaid, he had not his purſe.—'Well!' ſaid lady Clementina, 'was there ever 'any thing like that? Why you took 'out your purſe at the ſhop, as we went 'along.—Can you ſay you have *no* '*purſe* now?—I believe you think 'I mean to embezzle your money!— 'Come, come, give me your purſe, 'you ſhabby creature.'—'I have 'none,' ſaid Belmour, 'but I will 'fetch you immediately what gold you 'want.'—'No, no,' replied ſhe, 'I 'can get money enough from my 'uncle, or from aunt Eliza here, 'though *ſhe* wont much like to 'give me her's—but, mercy on me! 'I begin to gueſs—no, you could not 'give your purſe to that fright of a 'woman, at the cottage!—I never

'ſay

'saw such a poor starved looking crea-
'ture, nor such a dirty ugly child.'—
Belmour coloured, and the laugh be-
came almost general against him.—
Lady Clementina, with her usual flow
of spirits, and some humour, began an
account of their *adventures* that even-
ing—but his eyes, at the moment, met
Miss Melville's, and how was he not
repayed!—The look of sympathy, and
somewhat more than approbation, which
she seemed not even to wish to disguise,
touched him to the very soul.—Lady
Clementina continued her narration—
he heard her not. The pool at com-
merce was shortly finished, and lady
Eliza victorious, which put her into
such good humour, that, although at
the risk of the supper, which was an-
nounced as ready to come, being cold,

she

ſhe did not oppoſe lady Clementina, who, taking Miſs Melville by the arm, and leading her towards the piano-forte, declared that ſhe *muſt* hear her ſing, for ſhe knew 'ſhe could.' Miſs Melville, with that compoſure and ſimplicity of manner, which heightens the grace of every action, ſaid that ſhe ſhould obey inſtantly, not to give her the trouble of repeating her orders.—A muſic-book was placed before her, with the favourite Italian airs of the preceding ſeaſon. Several of theſe ſhe went over, accompanying herſelf with uncommon ſpirit and expreſſion.—Her voice was touching and harmonious—all were laviſh of their praiſes, Belmour excepted—*his* admiration was *felt*, not uttered. She then, on being deſired to continue, ſang ſeveral plaintive airs in the

the Venetian dialect.—Belmour begged of her to ſing one of thoſe airs, he was, he ſaid, '*ſure*' ſhe knew; a faint bluſh o'er ſpread her cheek as ſhe began, '*Perche amor mio ben naſcondi*,' the very air, Belmour, unſeen, had firſt heard her ſing in the garden. —The bluſh, however faint, and a ſomewhat of increaſed tenderneſs in the tone of her voice, did not eſcape him—to what could he attribute this? to the recollection of ſome abſent and intereſting object?—How painfully did Belmour already feel this concluſion! —Still too, as in the garden, Miſs Melville's voice ſeemed to convey to his ear ſounds not wholly new to him; yet this, he thought, *muſt* be fancy. Supper, a ſecond time announced, interrupted the muſic, and lord Delavere,

lavere, who had involuntarily, with the reſt of the company, been delighted, offered his hand to Miſs Melville, and led her into the ſupper-room. During ſupper, the converſation turned on various literary ſubjects, on all of which Miſs Melville ſeemed perfectly well informed, and ſpoke with taſte, preciſion, and judgment, whenever her opinion was called for. Italy was then mentioned, in praiſe of which ſhe dwelt, it ſeemed, with peculiar intereſt. 'Lord!' exclaimed lady Clementina, 'have you really been in 'Italy? how I envy you—well, I 'ſhould like to ſee the pope—and 'what amazing good fun it muſt be to 'walk about all night in the open air, 'without having aunt Eliza thinking 'it neceſſary to come and ſmother one

'up with a nafty fur-cloak—don't you 'hate fur-cloaks, Miſs Melville?—'but were you long in Italy?—*that* 'I am not ſure I *ſhould* like.' 'I 'was abroad nearly two years, Ma-'dam.' 'Two years,' repeated Belmour, half aloud, and half to himſelf. 'When, may I aſk, did you return?'—Some one, at the moment, ſpeaking to Miſs Melville, prevented her hearing, or at leaſt anſwering his queſtion, and, as it grew late, ſhe ſoon afterwards begged leave to retire.—A carriage was called for, but, as ſhe expreſſed her wiſh rather to walk, the company, lord Delavere and lady Caroline excepted, all inſiſted on ſeeing her home. The night, indeed, was ſo warm, that even lady Eliza could not fear catching cold. Lady Clementina was no ſooner

out

out of the firſt gate, but ſhe propoſed a circuitous walk to the parſonage, ſaying, it was 'much too fine to go 'home to bed.'—Belmour, who was walking by Miſs Melville, ſeconded this motion, and it was paſt twelve o'clock, before they got to the parſonage.

The rector was pacing backwards and forwards before his door, with his wig in one hand, and a handkerchief in the other, with which he kept wiping his head; and the heat from which he ſuffered ſeemed to be conſiderably increaſed by his impatience for the return of Miſs Melville, that he might, as he called it, '*ſhut up ſhop*;' an *elegant* metaphor, which he was accuſtomed to uſe on many occaſions.

The moment he ſaw Miſs Melville, he toſſed on his wig, and, waddling on forwards ſome way to meet her, cried, 'ſo Miſs, you are come at 'laſt!—I ſuppoſe you think folks ha' 'got nothing better to do, than to wait 'for you, he! he! he!—however I 'knew where you were, ſo there's no 'harm done.'—He then made a thouſand bows and *curvettes* to the company in general, and to lord Belmour in particular, hoping his lordſhip was well, and begging pardon for what he had ſaid. Then, with a loud laugh, he added, nodding and winking, 'but, 'you know, young women muſt be 'looked after, and Miſs is under my 'care.'—Miſs Melville, colouring, entreated not to detain the company, but, ſhortening the uſual compliments as

much as poſſible, thanked them for the honour they had done her.—They retired to the caſtle, to luxury and magnificence;—ſhe to her humble dwelling—yet, if 'ſweet be the ſlumbers 'of the virtuous mind,' to ſuch ſhe had a right.

CHAP. VII.

THE next morning, lord Delavere, at breakfaſt, announced his intention of going immediately to town, as by letters which he had juſt received, he had learnt, that his patent for the marquiſate he had been long ſoliciting was made out, that it would appear in the gazette that very week, and that he had now only to kiſs hands.

He told Belmour, that he ſhould keep him but a very few days, but muſt take him with him; 'though,' added he, '*you* muſt not kiſs hands, 'for I am in doubt between two titles 'of almoſt equal antiquity in our 'family,

'family, and cannot yet decide which 'to chooſe for you.—I ſhall the leſs be 'diſpoſed to ſtay in town,' continued he, ſtill addreſſing himſelf particularly to Belmour, 'as our men of buſineſs 'are arrived here this morning, with 'all the papers relative to ſettling our 'exchange of lands with your pretty 'couſin here, and they will not like 'waiting long—however, wait they 'muſt, for a few days, till we return.'

Belmour was by no means pleaſed with this ſudden departure; however, as he began now to indulge in the idea of knowing more of Miſs Melville, the opportunities of which, from the probability of her viſits at the caſtle being repeated, he truſted, would in future be frequent, he felt leſs pain

in acquieſcing in his father's propoſition; to which, indeed, he had no reaſonable objection to oppoſe. He had moreover of late obſerved Melford's attentions to lady Clementina appear to take a more ſerious turn, and ſhe ſeemed at leaſt to *liſten* to him.—This helped to encourage a thouſand vague ideas, which he ventured not to ſearch his own heart ſufficiently to define.

An early dinner was ordered, after which they ſet out—the carriage driving through the village, had not failed to attract the attention of the inhabitants, and the rector was one of the firſt, who ſallied forth from his door to ſee them paſs—In vain did he repeatedly try to ſtop ſome one of the ſervants,

ſervants, in order to inquire the cauſe of this unexpected departure.—They flew after the chaiſe, in which for celerity the earl now travelled, driving all before them, and ſhortly diſappeared in clouds of duſt.—The rector ſtill was not diſpoſed to give up his inquiry—on he walked towards the caſtle, from the outermoſt gate of which, as he approached, he ſaw the two lawyers iſſuing.—They were in queſt of ſome perſon, to ſhow them the way to the inn, where they expected to find their baggage, which they had ordered to come down by the ſtage.—Rycot was in queſt of intelligence from the caſtle—equally eager on both ſides, they ſoon met, and preliminaries were inſtantly ſettled. The rector was to ſhow them to the inn, and then

give them a bottle of his beſt ale at the parſonage.—He had not gone ten paces in company with them, when a *luminous ray* ſhot acroſs his imagination—'it muſt be ſo—it *is* ſo,' ſaid he, muttering to himſelf, and eyeing his companions from top to toe.—'I think gentlemen,' ſaid he, pulling up his breeches, 'I gueſs *your* buſineſs.'—'*Our buſineſs*, ſir, will ſoon be 'ſettled, I fancy.' 'Huzza!' cried Rycot, attempting a jump, and actually clearing the ground with his feet, 'huzza!—well God bleſs them, 'ſay I!—ſoon be ſettled?—aye, I'll 'warrant ye!—all agreed, no falling out 'there!—And when, tell me the 'day—I'll ſee why, if we be not all 'ready.' '*The day*,' replied one of the lawyers, with an expreſſion of much ſurpriſe

ſurpriſe at the vehemence of the rector, 'the day, ſir, we cannot exactly 'tell, but the writings will be drawn 'up within a fortnight; and as the 'parties ſeem perfectly agreed, there 'will only be to——' 'Say no more, ſay 'no more,' interrupted the parſon, in a perfect ecſtaſy.—'Come along, and you 'ſhall drink their healths in a bottle of 'ſuch ale as, I muſt needs ſay, who 'ſhould not ſay it, you never taſted in 'your lives.'—The reſt of his diſcourſe, which was chiefly in broken ſentences, was wholly unintelligible to the lawyers, and they both, by ſignificant looks to each other, expreſſed that they thought him a little crazy.

From the inn, they all proceeded to the parſonage, where they found Mrs.

Rycot and Miſs Melville in the little parlour.—The former was ſtill ſipping her tea, and the latter ſitting by her at work. The rector having uſhered in his company, with as much form as his joy would permit, buſtled up to his wife, and, in a half whiſper, ſaid, 'mind 'you're civil now to theſe gentlemen. 'I ſhan't ſay any more—all's ſettled— 'd'ye hear that, *old girl*, all's ſettled— 'but *mum*—mind what I ſay to you, 'that's all—*to be* in a fortnight.—Why 'thou look'ſt as ſtupid, woman!—I 'ſay they are to be married in a fort- 'night—doſt underſtand *that*?'—At this inſtant the bells accidentally began ringing—'never mind, gentlemen; ſad 'crazy old affairs, I know—one of 'them quite cracked—but never mind, 'I ſay, all ſhall be in order—ſet your

'hearts

'hearts at eaſe.'—The lawyers looked at each other with aſtoniſhment.—'*Lard*, my dear,' cried Mrs. Rycot, at the moment catching hold of Miſs Melville's hand, 'you look very pale, 'what's the matter? ſure you an't 'well?'—'Some folks never are,' muttered the parſon, 'when other folks 'are pleaſed.' 'Come along with me 'into the air,' continued Mrs. Rycot —'there lean on my arm, my dear, 'mercy on me! why how you change 'colour!'—Miſs Melville got up with ſome difficulty, and left the room with her conductreſs, owning that ſhe felt herſelf unwell, and begging leave to retire to her own room. 'Here then,' ſaid the rector, calling after her, 'take 'this letter, Miſs, I have had it in my 'pocket for you all day, and forgot to

'give

'give it you.—I don't know who it 'comes from—there, take it with 'you—my *ſarvice*, and good night, 'ſince you're not for coming back to 'us.'

'A very beautiful young lady that,' ſaid the younger of the lawyers, as the door ſhut.—'Pray, doctor, who is 'ſhe?'—'*that*,' replied he, rather teſtily, 'I have been often aſked, 'but never yet could tell; when I *can*, 'I will—but come, let's drink and 'drive care away.'—'We will pledge 'you in one glaſs,' ſaid they, 'but 'muſt be gone immediately.—We have 'much to do, were up early this morn-'ing, and muſt be up earlier to mor-'row, as we mean to make a viſit ſome 'miles off, at a gentleman's, where we 'have

'have buſineſs, and then meet my lord 'at his return, and have beſides many 'things to ſettle together to night, 'which *good company*, ſir, would inter-'rupt—and ſo, you will excuſe us.' Rycot, though rather diſappointed at their leaving him ſo ſoon, had nothing to oppoſe to their determination, and felt ſo well ſatisfied with his day, that he the more eaſily conſented to their going. Having ſeen them to the door, he returned to his little parlour, where, after finiſhing his bottle of ale by himſelf, he as uſual fell faſt aſleep in his arm-chair.

CHAP. VIII.

BELMOUR, from the moment he left the caſtle, had felt his ſpirits ſink, and as he proceeded on his journey, became more and more thoughtful and melancholy. His hopes of improving his acquaintance with Miſs Melville ſeemed to fade—and, if he did, to what muſt that not lead?—He no longer deceived himſelf, as to the ſentiments with which ſhe had inſpired him, but dreaded the conſequences of finding his heart further engaged, before he could know even to whom.—Much leſs if there could ever be a chance of any thing but miſery for him, in ſuch an attachment.—Yet voluntarily to give up

ſeeing

ſeeing her, was an effort he felt not diſpoſed to make.

Every thing appeared tireſome and unintereſting to him in town, and after a very few days, as the buſineſs on which they came appeared ſettled, and that his father was in poſſeſſion of his long wiſhed for title, finding that he propoſed making a viſit of ſome days more near town, Belmour determined to return without him. The marquis did not *object*, but ſhowed ſome ſigns of ſurpriſe at his ſon's propoſition, and fixed his eyes at the moment on him, in a manner that brought the blood into Belmour's face.—Nothing however further was ſaid, and the next morning, Belmour, with an agitated feeling of impatience, threw himſelf into the

the chaiſe, that was to convey him back to the caſtle. On the morning of the third day after his departure, he arrived there.—Caution had by this time given way to the ſoothing idea of again ſeeing the object of his admiration.—As he alighted, his ſiſter and lady Clementina flew to meet him.—He thanked them for their eagerneſs—inquired after their health with more than uſual warmth, and aſked every queſtion but the only one he was really anxious to have anſwered. Lady Clementina, however, ſo far ſhortly relieved him; for, turning to lady Caroline, ſhe ſaid, 'my dear, don't you 'think we might ſend for Miſs Mel-'ville, to come to us this evening? 'we have not heard of her theſe two 'days, and, poor thing! ſhe looked 'wretchedly

'wretchedly the night ſhe was here, 'though ſhe would not allow ſhe was 'ill, and ſang more like an angel than 'ever.'—To this propoſition lady Caroline aſſented, and Belmour took courage to ſay, that he would be their embaſſador, and carry their meſſage to Miſs Melville.

The moment dinner was over, Belmour, with a beating heart, flew to the parſonage—he found the rector walking to and fro' before his door, who immediately came up to him, bowing with even more than his uſual obſequiouſneſs.—'Humbly thank your 'lordſhip for this honour—juſt come, 'I find—left my lord marquis well, I 'hope—but pray, my lord, walk in— 'or would your lordſhip pleaſe to reſt

'yourſelf

'yourſelf firſt on this bench?'—Extending one hand forwards as he held his hat in the other—'I am always 'happy to wait on you, ſir,' Belmour politely replied, 'but my viſit 'this time was intended for Miſs Melville—to whom I bring a meſſage 'from lady Clementina and my ſiſter—'may I be allowed to ſee her?'—'Miſs Melville!—O dear! my lord, 'Miſs Emily went this morning—'bird flown, my lord,' ſaid the rector, ſmiling with complacency at his own *lively* mode of expreſſion.—'Went 'this morning!' repeated Belmour, endeavouring to conceal the painful ſurpriſe he felt.—'When does ſhe re-'turn?' 'O! my lord, Miſs Emily 'does *not* return.—I received a letter 'from doctor Stanmore, the day after 'your

'your lordſhip and my lord marquis
'went, to thank me, as he was pleaſed
'to ſay, for my care of Miſs Emily,
'and telling me, that ſhe was to leave
'us immediately—thought, indeed, we
'ſhould have kept her here all the
'ſummer, which to be ſure would not
'have been *quite* ſo convenient, as they
'ſay, but glad to do any thing for
'doctor Stanmore, my beſt friend.—
'Worthy man, my lord—got me re-
'commended to the biſhop for this
'living—glad, indeed, as I was ſaying,
'my lord, to do any thing for him, and
'I know he loves Miſs Emily as much
'as if ſhe were his own child—nay,
'ſome think ſhe is ſo, not that I believe
'it—though we all are young at one
'time or other, he! he! he!'

Belmour

Belmour gravely resumed, with an affected air of indifference—'Miss 'Melville is, I conclude, returned to 'doctor Stanmore's'—'No, my lord, no, 'Miss said she was going for the pre- 'sent to a relation's in town—*whom* she 'did *not* say—some folks, you know, 'never like talking of themselves, and '*I* never like asking questions others 'don't choose to answer.—So I took a 'place for Miss Emily in the stage, at 'her desire, and off she went.—My 'wife there was whimpering and 'crying to part with her—but she's a 'fool!—beg your lordship's pardon.' Seeing that Belmour continued to listen, the rector, highly flattered by being encouraged to continue his conversation, wished inwardly that he had known more on the subject than he did;

did; for this, owing to various circumſtances, was in reality very little: but what he did *not know*, he endeavoured to ſupply the place of by ſurmiſes and *inuendoes*; ſo that after a rhapſody of nearly a quarter of an hour, poor Belmour was left more in the dark than before, as to any eſſential part of Miſs Melville's hiſtory.—It was evident to him, that ſome myſtery hung over her birth and education, which doctor Stanmore had not thought fit to explain to the rector—Having no hope therefore then of further intelligence, and wiſhing to free himſelf from ſo unpleaſant a companion, Belmour took his leave. —He had gone but a few paces, when the rector, with his ſhort arm thruſt to the bottom of his coat-pocket, ſkipped after him, ſaying, that he had forgotten

a note

a note, which Miſs Melville had left for lady Caroline, and deſired might be delivered.—'With your lordſhip's leave 'I will take it up to the caſtle?'—'By 'all means, ſir,' Belmour replied, for gueſſing it to be merely a formal compliment at parting, he felt little curioſity as to it's contents, and was not ſorry, that *another* ſhould firſt carry the news of Miſs Melville's ſudden departure to the caſtle.—He was ſenſible, that the chagrin he felt would be but too viſible on his countenance, were he to expoſe himſelf to more penetrating eyes than the rector's, before he had had time to compoſe the agitation of his mind. He flew to his uſual refuge, when his mind was affected, a ſolitary walk, and directed his ſteps to the terrace already mentioned, overlooking

the

the ſea.—The evening was cloudy, cold, and bluſtering, and his favourite ſcene overcaſt—a few diſtant ſails only appeared in the horizon.—He went on haſtily to the further extent of the cliff, which there ſurmounts the coaſt; and then returning, ſlackened his pace as he came within ſight of the caſtle.

Belmour was naturally romantic (a diſpoſition frequently inherent in noble minds) of quick perception, and lively feelings.—The circumſtances, therefore, which had attended his ſhort acquaintance with Miſs Melville, and the myſterious cloud, which enveloped her hiſtory, added not a little to the intereſt ſhe inſpired.—Yet this half-formed paſſion, though it much agitated his heart, left him not without the uſe of his reaſon.

Even the clew was now loſt, by which he might have traced her ſteps—and, were it not, on what pretence could he follow her?

The teaſing combination of untoward circumſtances in which he felt himſelf involved, and the degree of uncertainty, which, in ſpite of reaſon and propriety, he experienced, how to act on an occaſion, which ſomething whiſpered to his mind *might* decide the future deſtiny of his life, embarraſſed and confuſed him.

By this time he drew near the caſtle, doubtful ſtill whether he ſhould enter; but on ſeeing his ſiſter at the window of her own apartment, it occurred to him at the moment, that poſſibly the note left by Miſs Melville, which lady Caroline

roline must have long received, might afford some light respecting her sudden departure; and judging his sister to be alone, he went directly to her room.

Lady Caroline came forwards to him, holding the note in her hand, with an expression of more *surprise* than *regret* on her face.—'Was there 'ever any thing so strange!' she exclaimed, 'as this sudden flight (I know 'you have seen the rector).—Well, 'these mysterious doings do not look 'well for our *beautiful friend!*—which 'I am sorry for,' she added, rather as if she *could* have said, I am *glad*.

'Your remark, sister, is not very cha-'ritable,' replied he, dryly—'but pray 'give me the note.' 'Not a single

'word or hint did she give of 'her intention, though, by the rector's 'account, she *must* have known 'of her going, when she was last 'with us'—continued lady Caroline, endeavouring to make good her story.

Belmour was attentively reading over the note, which contained nothing but an acknowledgment of the civilities received, expressed in the most polite terms.—She then ended, by wishing that it might at some future time be allowed her farther to excuse the, perhaps, seeming inattention of not having waited on them to take leave in person, and to explain the causes, which had prevented her.

'Well,'

'Well,' said lady Caroline, 'and is 'not *this* strange, brother? I must 'think,' continued she, 'as Mr. Cran-'ford said, who was here this evening 'to make a visit, just as the rector 'came, and who particularly knows 'the Melville family, that she must have 'taken that as a name merely to con-'ceal her own, or be at best some na-'tural daughter; for Cranford protests, 'that he never heard such a person 'even mentioned among them.' 'Sir 'Charles Melville,' he said, 'always re-'sided at his estate in the north, and 'has only one sister.—They are im-'mensely rich; and *you* will allow, bro-'ther, that it is not probable, were she 'indeed of that family, that they should 'wholly neglect *such a relation*, were 'there not some cause, that cannot well 'be to her honour.'

'This is a ſubject,' returned Belmour, 'my dear ſiſter, on which we 'are not likely to agree, therefore at 'preſent we will ſay no more upon 'it.—I know what has given an aſpe-'rity to your expreſſions, not natural to 'you—but all this is quite unneceſſary; 'you may, believe me, be *candid* with-'out fear, I am no knight errant'—ſaying which, he left the room.

It was now the uſual time for aſſembling in the evening at the caſtle, and candles were already lighted.—Belmour, wiſhing on this occaſion to avoid any appearance expreſſive of the ſenſations of his heart, went directly into the muſic-room, where the company often paſſed the evening—There he found lady Clementina dragging her aunt Eliza about the room,

in

in continued fits of laughter, and proteſting ſhe ſhould dance an *allemande* with her, which a ſervant of Belmour's, who touched the welch harp admirably, was, in obedience to her commands, then playing.

The moment ſhe ſaw Belmour, whom ſhe thought *rather* a better ſubject for her purpoſe, ſhe flew up to him, and ſeizing his arm, told him he muſt take her aunt Eliza's place.

Belmour made no reſiſtance, he danced inimitably, and on *no occaſion* thought it a mark of *good breeding*, to refuſe when he was called upon.

On lady Caroline's coming in, who vainly pleaded fatigue, and Heartly,

who arrived at the ſame time, as vainly the rheumatiſm, the *allemande* was converted into a Scotch reel, and from one dance to another, in the wildeſt flow of ſpirits, did lady Clementina continue till ſupper-time.—She had been *quite melancholy* at hearing Miſs Melville was gone—but ten minutes after almoſt forgot Miſs Melville had ever been there—At ſupper, however, ſhe reſumed the ſubject, ending by ſaying, ſhe was certain, that Miſs Melville would turn out to be ſome princeſs in diſguiſe, or ſome fairy ſpright, for ſhe ſurely ſeemed no common being.

CHAP. IX.

Two days afterward, and before he was expected, the marquis returned—He no sooner saw Belmour, than he told him, that he was sorry to send him away, but that his presence was absolutely necessary for a day or two in town, on particular business, and to sign some deeds of consequence. 'It's your own fault 'though,' said he, 'for you would 'have avoided this journey, had you 'only staid quietly with me, and not 'have been in such prodigious haste to 'return hither.'

Belmour had wished, he scarcely knew, or would not allow to himself,

why, for any excuſe, that might ſerve to carry him to town; for his going at that moment, he was aware, muſt be thought particular, without an aſſigned cauſe.—When his father therefore made his ſpeech to him, he could ſcarcely conceal the relief it brought to his mind.

Imagination ſoon ſuggeſted the poſſibility of again ſeeing Miſs Melville, ſhould chance favour him, and from that moment his whole thoughts were occupied on various plans to enable him to diſcover where ſhe had taken up her abode in town. Belmour was to ſet out, by his father's deſire, in two days time; he again tried the rector for intelligence—but in vain. The ſtage coachman (whom he ſaw under the pretext

pretext of having ſome books, of which he was particularly careful, conveyed from town) was next tried; and, with the aſſiſtance of Bertram (pretending it was at his ſiſter's requeſt) he actually did, in part, ſucceed in his inquiries. On his road to town, he found, that Miſs Melville had ſtopped a day at Exeter, it ſeemed, by the innkeeper's account, from having been unwell.

On his arrival in town, having previouſly informed himſelf where the Exeter ſtage put up, and feeling pretty ſure of not being known, he without delay went himſelf to the inn. The people there could give no account of any ſuch perſon as he deſcribed having been ſeen, but the innkeeper, at laſt re-

collecting himself, ſaid, 'our Jack' (meaning the ſtage-coachman) 'may 'perhaps know, and he's in town 'to day—only juſt ſtepped out a 'bit.'

The man ſoon after returned, but ſo drunk, that it was impoſſible to get a word out of him, and the ſtage-coach was to ſet out that very night. Belmour, vexed, unable to turn his thoughts to any thing, and believing his father's buſineſs might very well be delayed for a day, would not even go home, leſt he ſhould be ſtopped and prevented from proſecuting his preſent intentions, but walked about the ſtreets in the neighbourhood of the *Swan with Two Necks*, anxiouſly waiting for the time, when he thought the coachman

coachman likely to be in a ſtate to anſwer his queſtions.

On returning to the inn, he found the man ſtretched on the bench where he had left him.—On their rouzing him, rubbing his eyes, he aſked with an oath, why he was to be diſturbed before his time.—'G—d damn ye, why 'ye know, I never have but to ſhake 'myſelf, take a *ſnack*, and away!'

But on Belmour's addreſſing him, whoſe figure always commanded involuntary reſpect, he begged 'his honour's 'pardon,' and ſeemed anxious to give him every information in his power.

The man was naturally intelligent, and, on Belmour's deſcription, ſeemed perfectly

perfectly to recollect the perſon in queſtion—he told him, that 'the lady 'as he talked of had ſtopped at 'Staines—though,' ſaid he, 'ſhe was 'quite genteel, and payed the ſame as 'though ſhe had come to London.'

Belmour's prudence almoſt wholly now forſook him, to find that he was again diſappointed.—That but the day before he had paſſed through the very place, where he might have received intelligence, nay, where poſſibly Miſs Melville might actually be!—This was too much, and he determined, at all events, to return to Staines, truſting to the beſt excuſe he might be able to make for his appearance, ſhould he be fortunate enough to ſee Miſs Melville.—He however firſt ſent to his father's agent,

agent, with whom he appointed a meeting, and for that purpoſe delayed ſetting out till ſome time in the day following, hoping thus to finiſh his father's buſineſs in town; but the agent talked of ſome days more, at leaſt, before the papers could be ready for ſigning. Waiting for this, Belmour conſidered as impoſſible to his impatience; leaving word, therefore, that he ſhould be in town again in a day or two, he ſet out on horſeback, accompanied only by Bertram, for Staines.

On his arrival, he found no difficulty in procuring what information the landlord could give him, who was loquacious and communicative.

It appeared, that Miſs Melville (for by the deſcription and coincident circumſtances it could be no other) had been met, on her arrival at the inn, by a young man, and that a chaiſe had been ordered for them to go away together almoſt immediately; but that ſhe had found herſelf ſo ill, as to be unable to proſecute her journey, and that, having inquired for a private lodging near, ſhe had gone thither, and *he* believed the lady and gentleman were there ſtill, 'and *like* to remain.'

Belmour's colour went and came during this account—when the landlord ended, he deſired to be conducted to the houſe, where the lady was—''Tis 'juſt out of the town, my lord,' ſaid he, 'I'll ſhow your lordſhip the way.'

Belmour,

Belmour, though ſtruck with the idea of all the innkeeper might ſurmiſe, and aſhamed of his own folly, was unable to reſiſt the impulſe of his heart.—He walked on with hurried ſteps, till they came within ſight of a ſort of cottage, ſurrounded by a ſmall garden, encloſed with a low paling —'That's the houſe,' ſaid the man, pointing towards it, 'and there's the 'lady *a walking*.'

Belmour made him a ſign, that he need follow him no further, and walked up towards a ſmall gate opening into the garden—It was indeed Miſs Melville: ſhe was leaning on the arm of the young man who was with her—On Belmour's appearing (and he was certain ſhe had recognized him) ſhe turned away,

away, and, walking ſlowly, went directly into the houſe—the door was ſhut.

The young man having ſeen her into the houſe, walked up to Belmour with ſome quickneſs, juſt as he laid his hand on the latch of the garden-gate, with a deſign to enter.

'Do you want any thing here, ſir?' ſaid he, ſpeaking rather in a foreign accent. 'I wiſh, ſir, to ſay a few 'words to that lady,' replied Belmour, ſomewhat ſurpriſed at the manner, in which he had been addreſſed, 'and 'ſhall beg leave to wait on her now, or 'at her own time.'

'*That lady*, ſir, is ill, and cannot ſee 'any body.' 'Sir,' reſumed Belmour, eying

eying him from head to foot, 'I ſhall 'however take the liberty of ſending 'her a note, and of aſking at leaſt this 'favour from herſelf.' 'If you pleaſe, 'ſir, but ſhe will not ſee any body.'

The perſon who ſpoke ſeemed to be between twenty and thirty, his face was hard and much pitted with the ſmall pox, but his figure was manly and fine—he had a black ſtock round his neck, and a ſhort hanger by his ſide—his appearance was ſomewhat that of a ſeafaring perſon.

Belmour ſeeing him ſo little diſpoſed to enter into converſation, and fearing to create any ſuſpicion, that might injure Miſs Melville, if he then further intruded, took his leave.—The young man

man only juſt touched his hat as they parted, and ſtanding at the gate till Belmour was out of ſight, ſeemed deſirous to make ſure of his not returning.

Belmour, beyond meaſure chagrined, went back to his inn.—A thouſand painful ideas aſſailed his mind—It ſeemed evident, that Miſs Melville avoided him; yet he wiſhed for further certainty, though to what purpoſe he dared not aſk himſelf.—Note after note was written and torn; at laſt one, that, as he thought, could not give offence, was finiſhed, which he was juſt folding up, deliberating whether he ſhould ſend it that night, or wait till the next morning, when the ſudden clattering of a chaiſe was heard in the court, and preſently

ſently a voice not unknown to him repeated, 'lord Belmour! lord Belmour! you ſay is here! O! ſhow me in to him.'—The door inſtantly flew open, and ſcarcely leaving Belmour time to huddle the note into his pocket, St. Fort appeared, a being of all others he would leaſt have wiſhed to have ſeen at that moment—He knew him to be penetrating, curious, and malicious; while he aſked Belmour careleſsly how he 'came to be *ſettled* 'there!' inquiry lurked in his eye.—Belmour, reddening, anſwered, that he had expected to meet a perſon there on buſineſs, whom, not finding, he meant the next day to return to town. 'Well,' ſaid St. Fort, 'I am lucky, for 'I felt d—mn'd tired and little diſ-'poſed to go on to night, yet the

'thoughts

'thoughts of a *solo* in a dirty inn 'staggered me, and *now* (bowing) if 'I am not troublesome to your lord-'ship, I shall certainly not think my 'evening *dull*'—There was no possible excuse to be made; poor Belmour was therefore forced to submit to hear histories of persons he did not know, and scandal he did not believe, told, it was true, with much dry humour by St. Fort; but so little adapted to the state of Belmour's mind was this sort of conversation, that he could no way keep up his attention to one half of what he said.

St. Fort announced his intention of setting out the next morning on his road to Weymouth, at eight o'clock; this suited Belmour, as nine, he thought (being

(being prevented that evening) would be a proper time to ſend his note to Miſs Melville.

At about eight o'clock the next morning, Belmour heard a chaiſe drive out of the inn-yard: he doubted not but that it was St. Fort's, and riſing immediately, he dreſſed, and came down ſtairs, with the note in his hand—Calling to a waiter, he had begun explaining whither the note was to be carried, when St. Fort appeared.—Belmour ſtarted; the waiter, half frightened at the inſtantaneous change in Belmour's countenance, ſtammered.—'The *lady*, and pleaſe your lordſhip, I 'believe it is ſhe your lordſhip means, 'that lodged juſt out of town, had a '*chay* from our houſe this morning 'at

'at eight o'clock, and I believe ſhe's 'gone, my lord, but *maſter* knows 'better.'—St. Fort, who clearly had heard all that was ſaid, bruſhed by, with a half checked ſneer on his face, and going directly into the room where they had paſſed the evening together, the door of which ſtood open, walked up to the window, and leaning out, began humming an air with affected unconcern.

Belmour, whom no man dared to queſtion, when he decidedly forbad it by his looks, followed St. Fort into the room, and ordered breakfaſt.—St Fort, rubbing his eyes as he ſat down, ſaid he had over ſlept himſelf—the breakfaſt was tacit on both ſides, and ſhortly afterward St. Fort actually did ſet

out. He was no ſooner gone, than Belmour, giving way to the impulſe of paſſion, determined to follow Miſs Melville, and try to ſatisfy his curioſity at leaſt, as to her preſent deſtination, which he fancied might afford lights to aſſiſt him in his future conduct towards her. He inquired which road the chaiſe had taken, then mounted his horſe, and at the ſtage following, eaſily procured the ſame intelligence; but when he came to the ſecond ſtage, on the Hertfordſhire road, he was told that a chaiſe, to whom belonging they knew not, had come up to the door of the inn, and that the gentleman and lady he inquired for were 'gone off together.'—What road did they take? '*that*, your honour,' ſaid a waiter, pointing to a ſort of

by-lane, turning out of the great road, 'I *ſee'd* them go up yonder hill.'

Belmour, ſhaking the reins on his horſe's neck, ſet off in a ſwift gallop—He continued for ſome miles, plainly tracing the recent track of the wheels, when ſuddenly the lane ended, along which he had gone, and opened into a wide ſandy common, cut by fifty different roads—He was forced to ſtop—no poſſibility ſeemed now to remain of diſcovering which way the carriage had gone, one only miſerable cottage appeared in ſight, at which he could inquire. Thither he went, but could learn nothing—a poor old wretch, in tattered garments, was ſpinning at the door, ſo deaf, that he could with difficulty make her hear, and by no

means comprehend what he ſaid—ſhe ſeemed hardly to know what *a chaiſe* meant, but always anſwered—'Nay, 'farmer Blade's cart han't gone by to-'day.'

Belmour, though himſelf in deſpair, forgot not to aſſiſt the wretched, but dropped a guinea into the hand of the old woman, as he turned away his horſe from her door, and was followed by her benedictions, till the ſound of her feeble voice was loſt in the wind.

After vainly riding round and round the common, in hopes of catching again the loſt track of the wheels, Belmour was at laſt forced to ſeek the lane by which he came.

Thus foiled every way in his ſearch, he felt a degree of anger againſt the cauſe of ſo much, hitherto, fruitleſs inquietude. — He was evidently, he thought, avoided by miſs Melville, why he knew not; and arguing from the ſenſations of the moment, it ſeemed, to him ridiculous not to give up all further inquiries after her, and not to endeavour at leaſt to obliterate the impreſſion, which, unauthorized by hope or reaſon, ſhe had made on his heart.

In this ſtate of mind, haraſſed and fatigued, Belmour was met on his return to Staines by Bertram.—'*Mauvaiſes nouvelles milor*,' ſaid he, taking hold of the bridle with a trembling hand, as Belmour alighted from his horſe.—'Good heavens!' ſaid Belmour,

mour, 'my ſiſter is ill.'—'Non *milor*, 'non—not lady Caroline—my lord 'marquis—he is very ill indeed.'—'Who brought the news? where is 'the ſervant?' ſaid Belmour in an agony.—'Thomas, the groom, he brought 'the news, my lord, but he's gone on 'to town for milord's phyſician.—I *ſee* 'him luckily as he was changing his 'horſe—for he thought your lordſhip 'was in town—but he could not ſtop, 'as he *ſay* it was lady Caroline's order 'to loſe no time, but bring the phy-'ſician—and indeed they think *he come* 'too late, for the doctors from ...., 'who are with him, think he cannot 'live many hours.'—'Order inſtantly a 'chaiſe,' ſaid Belmour, in a ſcarcely articulate voice.—'A chaiſe, and four 'of the beſt horſes they can give—

'you, Bertram, I ſhall take in the 'chaiſe with me, be quick.'—Bertram flew, and having ordered the chaiſe, while it was preparing, ſilently put ſomething to eat before his maſter, who, he judged, as was the fact, had touched nothing ſince breakfaſt.—He dared not ſpeak, but as he put down what he had brought on the table, the poor fellow caſt a ſuppliant look towards Belmour, ſo expreſſive of his ſolicitous care for him, that it brought the tears, ready before to ſtart, into his eyes.—'I thank thee, Bertram,' ſaid he, 'I 'will try to eat,' and waving his hand to be left, he ſat down to the table.

The chaiſe was ſoon at the door, and from that moment, Belmour ſtopped

ſtopped only to change horſes, till he came to Belmour caſtle.

When he alighted, he ſaw a general gloom ſpread over every face—he aſked not a ſingle queſtion, but hurried to his father's apartment.—At the door of the bedchamber he was ſtopped by his ſiſter, who, coming to meet him, held up her hand in ſign of ſilence—ſhe gently ſhut the door,—'My father is 'juſt dropped aſleep, make no noiſe.'—'Oh God!' exclaimed Belmour, throwing himſelf on her neck—'I ſhall then 'again ſee my father!'—'Yes, my 'deareſt brother—but I fear there is 'little hope,' lady Caroline mournfully reſumed.—She then told him, that their father had been ſeized by a ſudden and violent attack, the ſymptoms of

which, although not clearly underſtood by the phyſicians who had hitherto ſeen him, were by them pronounced to be very dangerous; that, however, he did not now appear to ſuffer much; and that it was their opinion, that he might live for ſome time. The marquis's own phyſician, who ſhortly afterwards arrived from London, and who, at Belmour's particular requeſt, remained to attend him, confirmed this opinion. Every reſource of medical art was in vain exerciſed with conſummate ſkill, for the poſſible chance of his recovery—ſix weeks had now paſſed ſince the firſt ſeizure, during which Belmour had anxiouſly remained in the exerciſe of the moſt tender and unremitting attentions to his father, when meeting the phyſicians in the morning juſt after their

their firſt viſit that day, he was told by them, that the marquis appeared ſo much refreſhed by the more than uſual repoſe he had gotten the preceding night, and ſo much himſelf, that, ſhould he have a ſecond night as favourable, they ſhould not be without hope of a final recovery.—Belmour, revived by this encouraging ſpeech, went immediately into his father's room, and ſitting down by his bedſide, with a glow of ſatisfaction on his countenance, to which it had now long been a ſtranger—'I re-'joice,' ſaid he, 'to hear ſo good an 'account of you.'—'The phyſicians 'flatter you,' returned the marquis, with difficulty raiſing his heavy eyelids, and looking towards his ſon—'I ſay '*flatter* you—few fathers in this age, I 'fear.'—Belmour's face was in an in-

ſtant

ſtant covered with tears.—'My child,' continued he, ſtretching out his arms—then holding his ſon for a long time cloſely preſſed to his boſom—'be 'aſſured, that your affection—the re-'collection of your conſtant tender-'neſs, and unremitted duty towards 'me, now ſoftens all I ſuffer, and 'makes even theſe moments more 'than tolerable—but I affect you too 'much,' ſaid he, ſeeing Belmour choked with tears, and unable to utter a word—'compoſe yourſelf, my ſon, 'I have lived happily—die happily, 'and truſt in the mercy of that Divine 'Power, that doubtleſs watches over 'us—what mortal can ſay more?—'Something yet I would requeſt,' he continued, 'but I fear to diſtreſs 'you'—his voice almoſt failed him.—

'You

'You know my earneſt wiſh—Cle-
'mentina, the child of my adoption—
'but no more—I wiſh your happineſs;
'only, my ſon, be not too haſty in your
'choice—*this* I do entreat, and it may
'be a weakneſs, but a long line of ho-
'noured anceſtors, whoſe pedigree re-
'mains hitherto unſullied, I would wiſh
'not to think, even in that particular,
'could ever be diſgraced by you—but
'I am fatigued—go, my ſon,' ſaid he, leaning back on the pillows which ſupported him, and ſtretching forward his hand, which Belmour affectionately kiſſed—'go, my ſon, farewel.'—Again waving his hand, his eyelids cloſed as Belmour left the room—he ſcarcely ſpoke again after this laſt farewel to his ſon, but falling into a ſtate of ſtupor, in the courſe of the following night,

night, to appearance without pain or effort, expired.

The marquis was ſincerely regretted, not only by his children, but by all his domeſticks and dependants, to whom he was kind and generous. His pride, though exceſſive, being always accompanied by benevolent attentions and politeneſs to thoſe, who were ſubordinate to him in rank, rather ſerved to increaſe reſpect and deference, than to give offence.

Belmour was much affected at the death of his father, and his laſt words made a ſerious impreſſion on his mind —he wiſhed even, could it be conſiſtent with his own future happineſs, fully to comply with his dying requeſt.

Lady

Lady Clementina had remained at Belmour caſtle, unmindful of all her youthful vanities, in conſtant and affectionate attendance on her uncle and lady Caroline, whoſe health viſibly declined: her eyes were ſometimes filled with tears at their ſufferings, and ſometimes ſhe relieved their drooping ſpirits by her natural and unaffected flow of mirth and gayety.—Treated with the affectionate familiarity of friendſhip by this lovely and amiable girl, Belmour, at times, almoſt thought he loved her, and the image of miſs Melville, for the moment, faded on his imagination; but before theſe impreſſions were ever ſufficiently ſtrengthened, to allow him to take a decided reſolution, ſome ſudden and childiſh ſally of lady Clementina's, or ſome mark

of

of thoughtleſs indifference for him, at once deſtroyed them, and made him doubly ſenſible how much his heart required ſympathy, both of character and feelings, to render a ſerious engagement in any degree conducive to his happineſs.—Then again that image, ever moſt dear to him, returned with renewed power, although he feared to yield to what he rationally conſidered might be only the effect of deluſive paſſion.—Thus paſſed about a fortnight after the death of his father, when the ſtate of lady Caroline's health grew ſo conſiderably worſe, that immediate change of climate was recommended by the phyſicians as the only chance of ſaving her from a decline. Belmour, alarmed for his ſiſter, inſtantly determined to accompany her to Liſbon,

and

and from that moment, was wholly occupied with preparations to make the journey as eaſy and tolerable as poſſible to her, who, naturally of a gentle, timid nature, was now, from illneſs and depreſſion of ſpirits, wholly incapable herſelf of making the leaſt exertion. In little more than a month from the time of their father's death, they ſet out on their road to Falmouth, taking leave of lady Clementina, who had remained at Belmour caſtle, and would not quit them till their departure, but gave them the laſt farewel with ſtreaming eyes, and ſaw them actually drive from the door, before lady Eliza could perſuade her, to get into her own carriage, though ſometimes ſcolding, and ſometimes ſoothing; ſhe had repeatedly remonſtrated againſt crying, which ſhe

ſaid

ſaid was at once the worſt thing poſſible for the health, and the moſt unbecoming to the complexion, and, raiſing her voice, 'lady Clementina, my dear,' ſaid ſhe, ſobbing herſelf, 'if you cry 'ſo, you will not be able to ſhow your 'face at Weymouth' (whither they were going for the latter ſeaſon), 'and 'I hear that all the world is to be 'there.'

Thus the couſins parted, and, taking oppoſite roads, bade adieu to Belmour caſtle.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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